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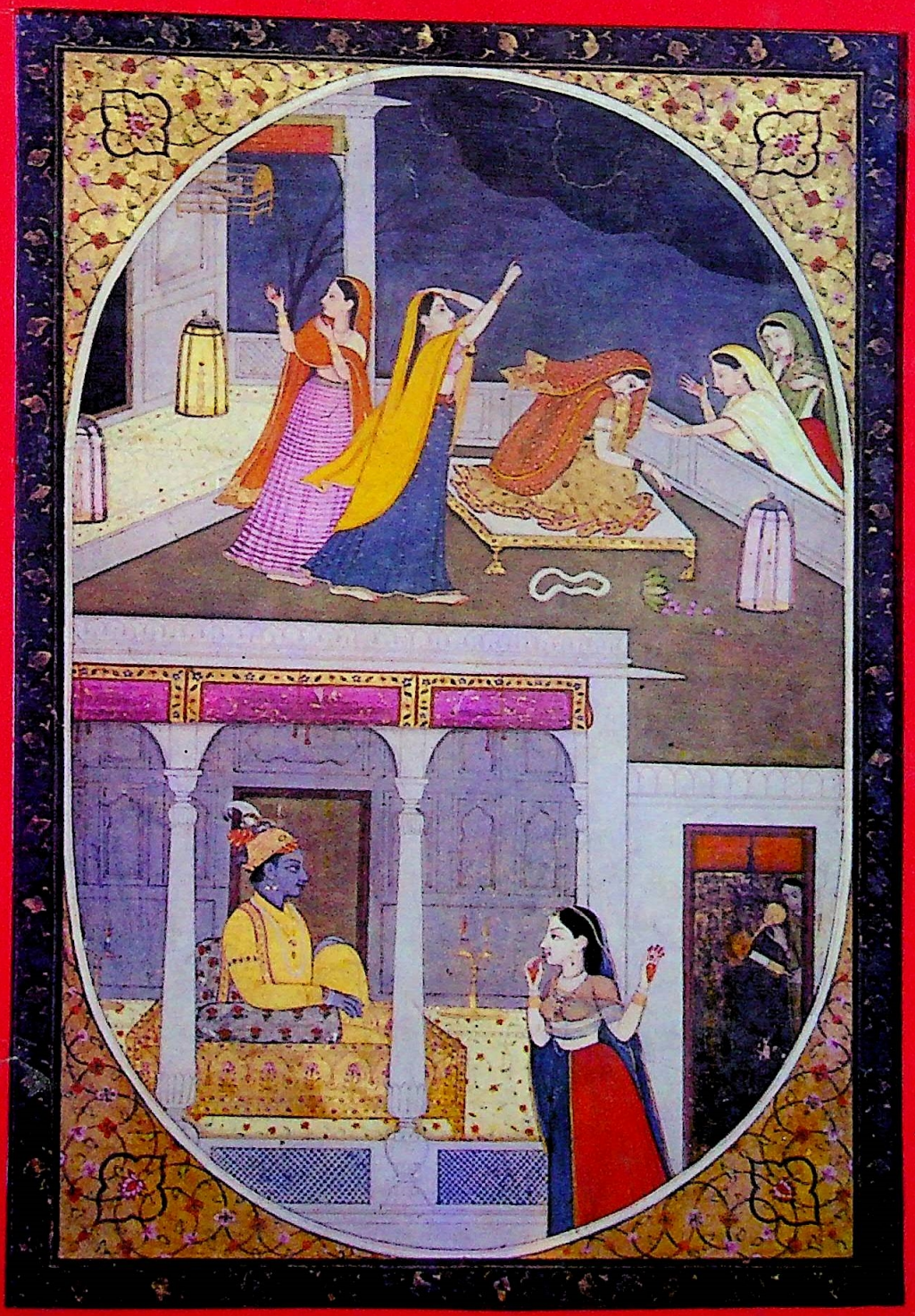
HINDU VIEW OF ART



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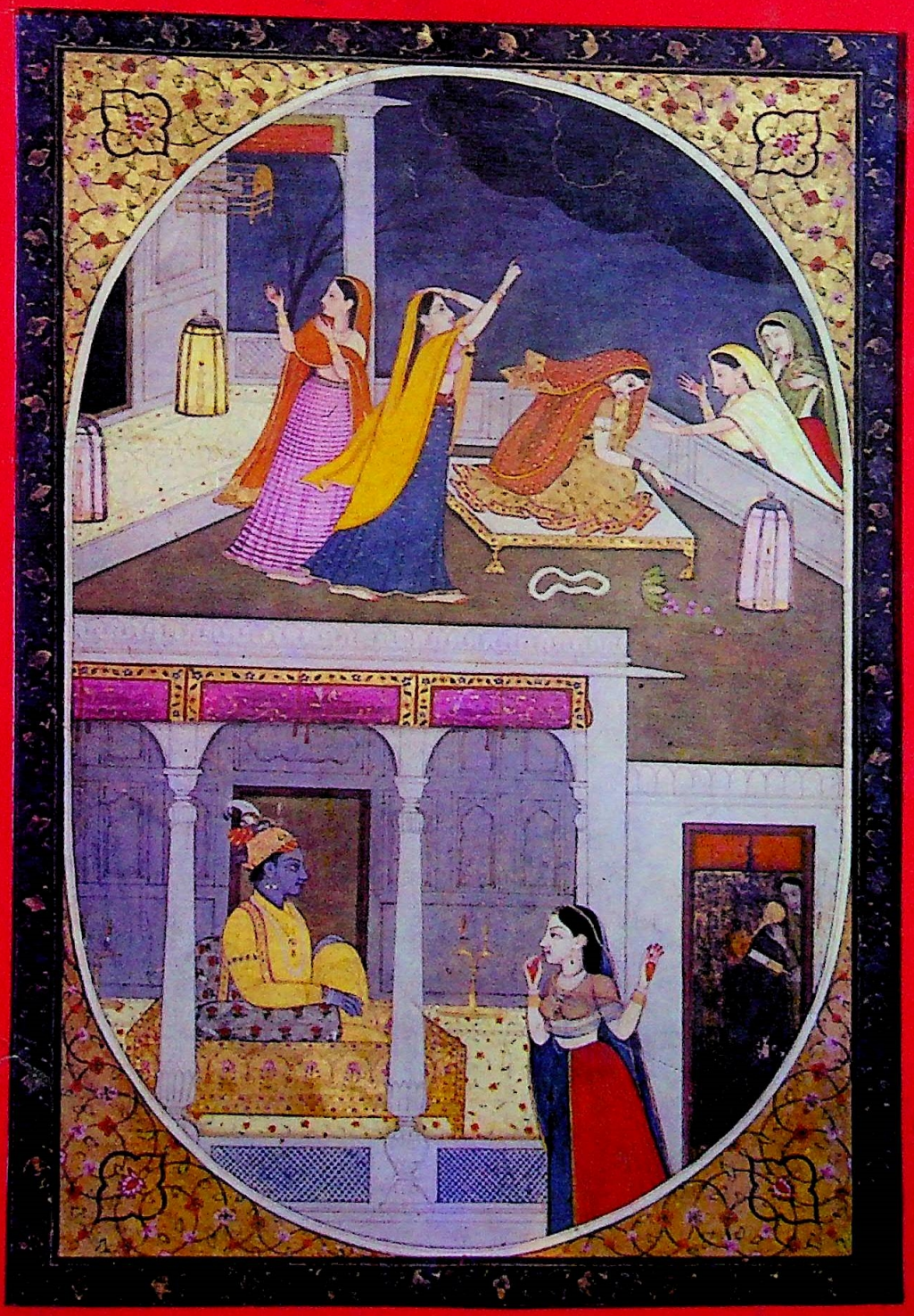
HINDU VIEW OF ART



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This book was initially written as an introduction to the study of the background of Indian arts under the guidance of Ananda Coomaraswamy, the pioneer interpreter of Indian cultures.

It met with a favourable response in the West, as it differentiated, after Dr Coomaraswamy's essays, the purposive inspiration behind the creative works in Bharat, from the post-European renaissance view of 'Art', with capital 'A', as expression of individual talent in search of 'significant form'.

The book was revised for a reissue in 1956. The new edition is being brought out to emphasise, in view of the dominantly chronological approach of Western art historians, the fact that our traditional arts were not for 'looking at' in art galleries but for contemplation in shrines.

This handbook of Indian artistic ideals, then, seeks to sum up all such considerations, philosophical, religious, aesthetic and technical, as might be helpful for the understanding of ancient and medieval architectures, sculptures and paintings, except for the secular Mughal arts which developed as court arts.

Besides the text by the author, and the original introductory essay on *Art and Reality* by Eric Gill, *The Philosophy of Ancient Asiatic Art* by Ananda Coomaraswamy *A Bird's Eye View of Indian Aesthetic* by K.C. Pandey, and *The Symbolic Aspects of Form* by Alice Bener, have been included as these essays supplement the expositions published in the first edition of the book.

The author wishes to bring the old attitude of anonymity to the study of our traditions, where few or no craftsmen signed their works.

Rs. 250

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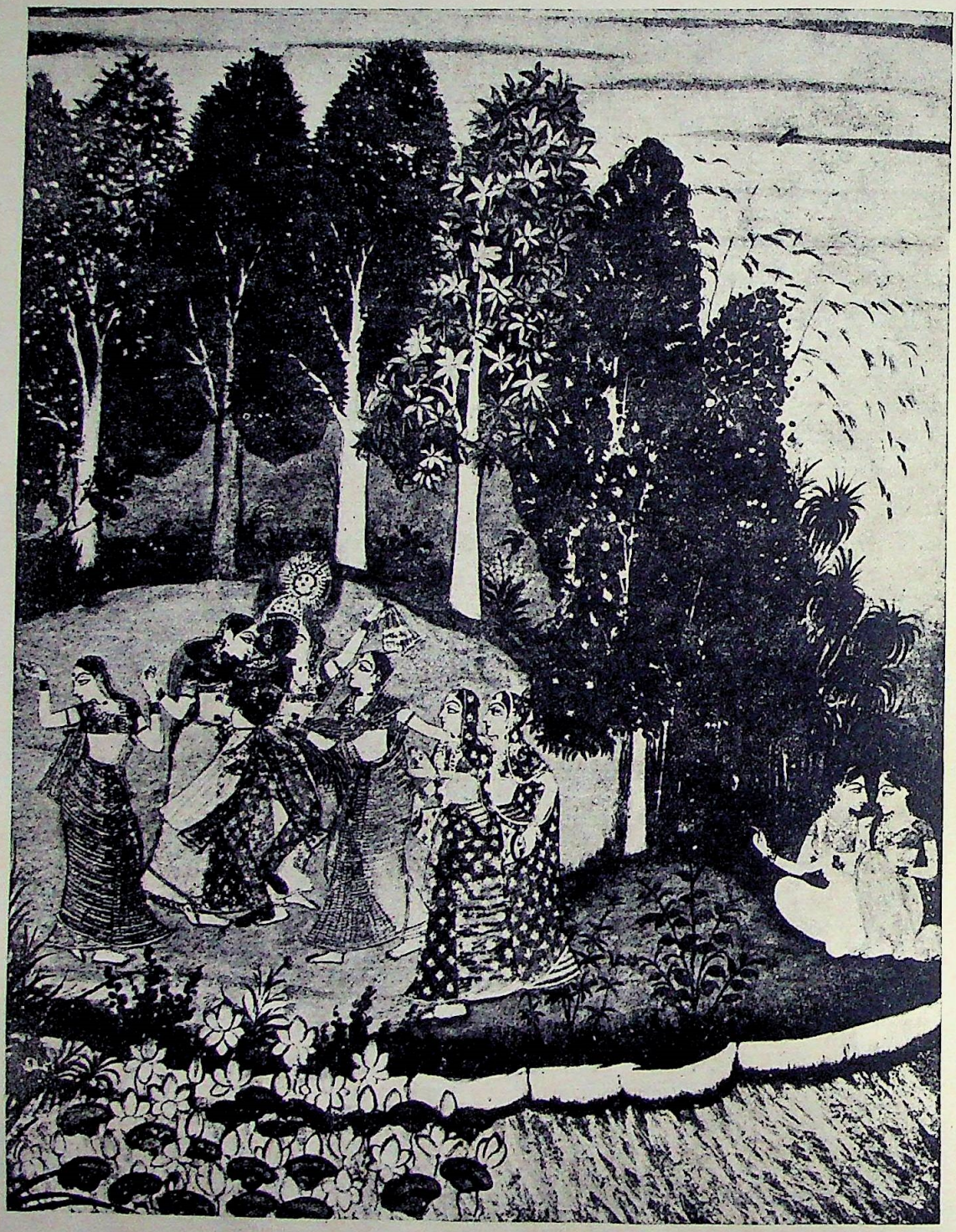

Frontispiece

RASA LILA : KRISHNA DANCING WITH GOPIS
Kishangarh, about 18th Century

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THE HINDU VIEW OF ART

With an Introductory Essay on

Art and Reality

By Eric Gill

Mulk Raj Anand

Arnold-Heinemann

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DEDICATION

This book was originally dedicated to my teachers, E.B. Havell and Anand Coomaraswamy. I add here the name of Nihar Ranjan Ray, with whom I have shared many ideas and images of Indian art.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THAT a third edition of the Hindu view of art has been asked for shows that there is a growing interest in Indian art ideals, both in our country and abroad.

As is now fairly well known, the Hindus did not evolve a coherent system of aesthetics. The plastic arts of sculpture and painting were considered to be purposive arts in the service of the faith. The stone image was used for ritualistic worship and the painting was employed both for concentration of the mind in prayer and extension of consciousness, as well as for extrovert illustration of the myths and legends of the gods and goddesses (mythical exaltations of nature energies and of heroic men and women), for popular worship. It was only for a century or so in the 'classical renaissance" that painting as a fine art came to be accepted as the expression of the individual artist, even though the ladies and gentlemen of the court prayed to the gods for inspiration before beginning their work, as in the plays of Kalidasa.

There is no record of any concrete appreciation of a work of plastic or pictorial expression in Indian literature throughout the ancient and medieval periods, until the Mughals. The terms ***Ananda, Rasa*** *and* ***Dhavani*** *are mentioned in connection with the arts, but these terms were primarily invented for the appreciation of poetry and drama and architecture, and remained general references without ever being applied to a concrete work.*

When the need was felt, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for the demonstration of India's exalted tradition in the arts, in the wake of Indian national resurgence, the nomenclature of poetics was invoked and put forward as a full fledged aesthetic theory for the arts. Ananda Coomaraswamy, however, corrected the superficial tendency of positing a substitute theory of aesthetics, where none existed to match various western systems of aesthetic, by drawing attention to the aesthetic ideals implicit in Hindu religion and philosophy.

The present book was mainly an elaboration of Dr. Coomaraswamy's view point, in a longer and more detailed essay than he had attempted and it was written under his guidance in the late twenties. It is important to understand the differences between the traditions of East and West in regard to the approach to aesthetics. In India beauty was the aesthetic aspect of the Transcendent spirit, Ananda, who is the totality of the Cosmos and who is tasted as Rasa. In the West, specially after the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century, Beauty tended to be considered as an autonomous emotion evoked by compositions in colour, line and form. It is evoked by artworks through the science of a work of art. The content is supposed to be implied by the form.

The emphasis that separates the Indian and foreign attitudes cannot be glossed over, unless we try to understand the different points of view, as they developed in India and Europe, under different historical, social and metaphysical situations.

It is possible that the differences between the spaces of the vast Asian landmass and the comparatively smaller confines of Europe affected human attitudes. Space in India was then cosmic, beyond understanding, to be realised by alliance with its vital energies. In Europe after the Renaissance, it was to be conquered, occupied, exploited. Undoubtedly, however, the nature Gods, conceived by the Vedic Aryans during their infiltrations from the north of the Caucassus towards the land of the five rivers, were compelled by cosmic emotions, through which elemental energies were personified by the primitivist, naive peoples, and later rationalised into poetical metaphors, concepts and icons, by the profound Brahmins. The process of abstraction made for the giving of more arms, hands and heads of metaphysical images to denote powers and capacities of the different divinities.

The Greek Gods, also originally invoked from elements of nature, came to be conceived as perfect men and women. Thus the handsome man, Apollo, has only a couple of wings on his shoulders to elevate him to the image of godhood. Ostensibly, however, in Macedonia and the Greek islands, as well as in Western Anatolia, man was already more important as the maker of things and dominated the landscape.

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Thus the tasting of ***Rasa*** *of a poem, as a 'the realisation of one's own consciousness as coloured by emotions, (put forward by the sage Bharata about the second, third century A.D.) in connection with dance and music in his Bharatnatya has no exact parallels in Western thought. But Aristotle seems to have had a similar attitude when he regarded poetry as the expression of emotions, and aesthetic appreciation of a poem to be possible when emotions are objectified and contemplated disinterestedly. In his* ***Philosophy of Fine Arts*** *Hegel also put forward a similar hypothesis. And latterly Croce has expressed like hunches. The scholastics were nearest to the Hindu view, as they attributed poetic delight to the perception of intelligible non-conceptual form in the emotions which may approximate to divine aspiration, or some intelligent principle in the mind. But* ***Rasa*** *is a unique concept of delight, or joy, of self revelation through awareness of the higher self or the cosmic spirit,* ***Ananda****.*

In his interpretation of the Hindu View of Art, Coomaraswamy was consistent. He allied himself with the perennial philosophy and considered only those art works to be worthy of attention which were produced as images for Yoga, in the holy temples in which they were placed. He went so far as to support the orthodox view of the ***Sukranitisara*** *that 'even a misshapen image of a god is a good image'. And he felt that there could be no real art after the* ***Satyug*** *(including the early Christian era where the creative works were divinely inspired), as the ego of the Artist (with a capital A) has become dominant in the current centuries of the* ***Kaliyug.*** *Coomaraswamy considered man as a composite whole of body and spirit; body and soul being the psyche of self, while the spirit is the higher self. He held that the psychic or human or mortal self* ***is*** *always, while the higher Self is immanent, immutable and eternal. Creative art is a mental activity. And the artist becomes his art, in so far as the active Self becomes what it contemplates. Creation itself is a discovery of what has already been made by God: the human artist is only allowing the divine in him to work out the imitable forms which are in the body and soul of God. 'Art', he wrote 'can then be defined, as the embodiment in material of a preconceived form.' Inspiration is 'some spiritual force working within you.'*

The Hindu view, as propounded by Coomaraswamy, sets up the ideal that 'Beauty is perfection or God'. And, in the light of this, only divinely inspired works are admissible as genuine artefacts.

The absolutism of this view thus leaves no room for individualist works of the Post-Renaissance era.

Obviously, there are, then, great difficulties in inheriting the Hindu tradition and extending it.

I was inclined, in spite of my dilemma, to agree with the orthodox view, to accept the Bengal revival of the early 20th century, because Coomaraswamy had backed it. Only on seeing the actual works of the revivalists, I realised how a mere religious inspiration could be no guarantee of deeply felt expression, in a time when the Post-Renaissance ideas and 'form' of the West have become part of our culture, through the preference of modern secular democracy in which the growth of the individual is important. In view of the conflicts between the demands of tradition and the compulsion, of modernity, I have worked out, in my writings in Marg, some hypothesis for a humanist aesthetic.

I feel all that exalts man, uplifts him, and inspires him to higher consciousness or intense awareness of the cosmos, in the past or present, may come within the purview of aesthetic vision. I accept whole-heartedly, Coomaraswamy's concession to man when he accepted: 'the human value of anything made as determined by the coincidence in it of beauty and utility, significance and aptitude.'

And this partial agreement of a latent pantheism, which admits plurality, is my only excuse for publishing this new edition of a work, which would otherwise not admit relative degrees of perfection in works of art but force all of us to seek divine sanctions.

I hope, however, that this essay can help students to study the Indian heritage, properly, as Coomaraswamy insisted, from the totality of the philosophical, religious and social background from which it was produced and not merely from the point of view of 'significant form or other limited classical, medieval and other periodic points of view or from the point of various Western aesthetic or of pragmatic John Dewey, the formalist, Clive Bells significant form;' or Le Corbusier's mechanical functionalism. The background of the developments of Indian thought which have been put forward in the following pages may be supplemented by 'A Bird's Eye View of Indian Aesthetic' by Prof.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

K.C. Pandey, and 'The Symbolic Aspects of Form' by Alice Boner which I have appended to this new edition, (apart from the previous appendix The ***Philosophy of Asian Art*** *by Ananda Coomaraswamy). These are introduced so that the contributions of the various theorists of aesthetic in India can supplement my exposition and the symbols and forms understood in terms of western aesthetics.*

The images reproduced in this book may reveal the transition from the Mohenjo-Daro seemingly Shiva image, the ancient mother Goddess terra-cotta to the later sculptures and painting, through implication of content in volume, linear rhythm and plasticity. It may be possible, then, to suggest some modern hypotheses to help the understanding of the philosophical, social and technical situations of the period, when various works of art were constructed. And, it may be necessary to project one's imagination into the creative process of the craftsmen, who made these objects in the context of the societies of that time. Such researches may be fruitful for the appreciation of the vitalities of Indian creative arts as against the routine works of lesser skill, by the students of our traditional art, rather than regard all ancient and medieval works as masterpieces.

It may be possible, then, for the new young to inherit the larger part of an old culture, by studying the waves as parallel movements of thought and creative action, from the total understanding of facts of the times and the various philosophical backgrounds and their aesthetic implications.

I have added texts by the late Dr. K.C. Pandey entitled ***'A Bird's Eye View of Indian Aesthetics'*** *and Madam Alice Boner* ***'The Symbolic Aspect of Form'****, to supplement such considerations as I had left out in my own exposition.*

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I WROTE this book, in the first flush of youthful endeavour,—as a popular introduction to the background of Indian Art under the guidance of Ananda Coomaraswamy, the pioneer critic of Indian art, who had already published two short essays on this theme in his famous collection, *The Dance of Siva*. And it enjoyed a favourable response, both from the press and the public, because, presumably, it fulfilled the needs of those who were uninitiated into the complex of Hindu and Buddhist traditional thought and practice, which had supplied the basis for the bulk of the creative activity of two thousand years in our country.

The 1933 edition, which was brought out by Messrs. George Allen and Unwin, has long been out of print. And I have been toying with the idea of a reprint, since nothing in the nature of a handbook on Indian aesthetic ideals has appeared in the time that has elapsed, except an occasional essay by Rabindranath Tagore, Masson Oursel or Coomaraswamy.

As the rediscovery of India has begun, under the impulse of Indian emancipation, to assume the character of a minor renaissance and new spurts of activity are visible in the field of Indian art discussion, I have allowed this book to go to press as a modest exposition of ancient belief, if only because they offer a contrast to present-day western ideas. The volume appears, then, more or less as it was originally published, except for the deletion of some immature thoughts at the end of the original book and with the addition of some new illustrations, as well as an essay by Dr. Coomaraswamy in the form of an appendix. For, in spite of many differences which I found in my outlook with the ideas of this revered teacher, I have felt, with the years, that the basic hypothesis about the deep inner connection between aesthetic and spiritual values in India, and, indeed, in the whole of Asia, was sustained right until the European impact of the eighteenth century. Thus Coomaraswamy's essay crystallises the research embodied in my book, in spite of my many differences of emphasis with him.

Similarly, I have allowed the introductory essay of my friend and teacher, the late Eric Gill, to stand where it was in the 1933 edition. For though disagreeing with several incidental opinions, I still share with him the basic conviction that, as is the philosophy of a people, or their way of life, so will be their art, and that if we are to understand the great creative periods of the past, we must look at them not only in terms of the food surpluses which were available or not available, but also in terms of the ideas generated by the way of life which is the outcome of a subtler dialectic than that yet comprehended by contemporary sociologists. The MS. has been revised throughout. I hope that this book will fill the lacuna that still exists for a guide to Indian aesthetic ideals and that it will afford some kind of assistance to the growing number of admirers of Indian art of this generation, both in Asia and the West, as it afforded a modest stepping stone to my own contemporaries.

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Perhaps it will also help our artists to discover, in the new industrial age, the need for a thought attitude as a preliminary to creative work. For, since the decay of the values of the great religions, the necessity for belief in an organic democracy (which may yet have to be evolved), has become inevitable if the rhythmic arts are to survive as more than mere decorative sentimentalism or the adornments of personal snobbery.

I hope, later, to publish another small book on aesthetic theory, dealing with the predicament of the arts in contemporary India. Meanwhile, I would like, through the present essay, to shift the emphasis from present-day 'thinging' to 'thinking'.

M.R.A.

KHANDALA, 1956

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THERE has so far been no book on the Hindu view of art corresponding to the available introductions to various European systems of aesthetics. Mr. Havell's *Ideals of Indian Art* was more concerned to explain particular examples of Indian art in the light of the Hindu view of art than with that view as such, and all that is available on the topic are Dr. Coomaraswamy's two small essays included in his admirable *Dance of Siva.* In the following essay I have attempted to elaborate the plan laid out by Dr. Coomaraswamy, and have sought to supply such a short, simple exposition of the Hindu view of art as might interest the average uninitiated reader.

It must be expressly noted that it is not a book on Hindu aesthetics, but an essay on the general Hindu attitude to art. For the Hindus never wrote a treatise on the philosophy of beauty of which an exposition could be given, nor did they value, as Dr. Coomaraswamy has so often insisted, and as Mr. Gill has often explained, their works of art purely as "works of art." A recent critic, Mr. K. de B. Codrington, has summed up the general Hindu attitude beautifully when he said : " Indian thought does not isolate objects by aesthetic analysis or any other analytical process. The associations of a piece of sculpture or a whole temple and the associations of the person brought into contact with it both contribute to the state of mind from which the sense of values is derived. Among the associations of a piece of sculpture or a temple, which, so to speak, wait upon the mind, its subject or dedication and its repute as a place of sanctity, its legends or miracles, and the thousands of pieces of money that have been paid to bring it into being, all have import. It follows that devotion can derive value from any chance stone or redaubed rock. This confusion between the religious and aesthetic, so obvious to the analytic mind, is not a matter of failure to arrive at distinctions, but of a definite refusal to admit of distinctions in the sum of reactions that is human life, in which qualities are held to exist as stupid preferences and intensity alone is satisfying."[1] " From the point of view of the Indian artist, too," Mr. Binyon has written, " the religious import was everything: their conscious endeavour was concentrated upon that. Design, colour, composition, all the purely aesthetic elements of their work, were left to the more intuitive activities of the mind."[2] In writing my essay I have therefore followed the example of the authorities cited above, and, departing from the strict sense of the words art and aesthetic as they are used in Europe, I have summed up under the general title of the Hindu view of art all such considerations—religious, philosophic, sociological, aesthetic, and technical—as might be helpful for the understanding of Indian art.

Although, however, I have relaxed the term aesthetics to cover all sorts of considerations, I have woven these considerations on the thread of those idealisms which run

[1] *An Introduction to the Study of Mediaeval Indian Sculpture*, pp. 19-20.
[2] *My Pilgrimage to Ajanta and Bagh*, Mukul Dey. Intro. Laurence Binyon, pp. 19-20.

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through all Hindu activity and thought. The essay thus falls into fairly well-defined parts and discloses a continuity not far removed from the ideal of logical classification.

As will be obvious from Mr. Eric Gill's Introductory Essay, appended to this volume, and from the occasional footnotes from M. Jacques Maritain and other European authorities, a constructive attempt has been made to relate the Hindu view of art to its counterparts in Western systems of thought. I hope that this will induce the reader to believe that behind the many differences of form which the peculiar backgrounds of different nations impose on their arts and crafts, there is a common undercurrent of the search for beauty in the pursuit of which all the various peoples of the world can come together to appreciate each other's differences in the humane sprit of a tolerant understanding, sympathy and good will. And the general European contempt for or indifference to Indian or oriental art, may disappear, if the average Westerner realises that the European Christian tradition, too, was at one time as deeply metaphysical as the Hindu or the Buddhist.

Throughout this essay I have taken liberties with the Sanskrit language for which I must apologise. But the correct phonetic pronunciation of Sanskirt phraseology is an ideal which the average English reader can hardly be expected to attain, and too many dots and dashes would, I thought, hamper rather than help me to convey the meaning of archaic terms, which should really be totally absent in such a book as this.

I have a great many debts to pay (if indeed they can be paid by merely acknowledging them) for the kindly interest and help of many distinguished authorities on Indian art. To Mr. Havell and Dr. Coomaraswamy I owe the first impulses which led me to attempt this essay, and both of them have generously encouraged me with advice and criticism. Mr. Herbert Read and Mr. K. de B. Codrington read the manuscript, and Sir William Rothenstein gave me his views on several controversial issues both in writing and through discussion. Last but not least, I have to record my deep gratitude to Mr. Eric Gill for favours too numerous to mention. The deep religion of his teaching has been to me literally the revelation of a new gospel. I hope I shall be able one day to assimilate the lessons I have learnt from him. Meanwhile, I find refuge in the memory of those many hours through which I have sat at his feet listening to the wisdom, some of which he has enshrined in the discourse accompanying this essay.

I would wish to make my acknowledgments to all those who have given me permission to reproduce plates in their possession.

M. R. A.

HENDON, 1932

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

ON

ART AND REALITY

by ERIC GILL

THE unity of the human race must be taken for granted. Differences between one person and another or between one race and another and between the people of one time and another are simply differences of emphasis. This being so, it is to be expected that all human beings and all races will pursue the same ends, and all differences of achievement are to be attributed not so much to differences of aim as to differences of temper and circumstance. It is the more important to grasp this fact with firmness when the subject of discussion is, as in the case of the arts, a thing of which the achievement has been so various and, as in the case of religion and philosophy, a thing of which the expression has been so apparently contradictory, and when, in addition, the subject is complicated by racial and geographical differences.

Now the aim of the human race, in whatever time or place, the end to which all activity is ultimately directed, is the discovery and grasping of the real. However variously this aim may be described or pursued ; however erroneous may be the conclusions of reason ; however distasteful may be the artistic achievements of one people to a people of another time or place ; nevertheless Reality, what is real and not illusory, is what is sought by each and by all.

Now, we may accept as the real, either what is immediately apparent to our senses or, at the other end of the pole, confronted by the countless evidences of the invalidity of conclusions drawn from immediate sensory experience, we may refuse the name of reality to anything but those things of which we have immediate interior knowledge. At the one end is the ordinary, unthinking, and, as he is in Western society called, "practical" man (though it may be doubted whether a perfect example of him really exists), at the other are they who hold that mind is the only reality, and that the universe only exists for him who perceives it. In between is every sort of mixture and compromise. The typical materialist of Western commercial civilisation is confused by the dregs of other traditions; moreover, he takes even his religion of science for the most part on the authority of journalists and popular writers, and very little or not at all on the evidence of his senses. The idealist, on the other hand, is constantly entrapped by circumstances, which, even to himself, seem to demand at least a temporary or conditional assent to the notion of material reality. Urgencies of appetite and of physical pain drag him away from his detachment, and as in the beginning "Adam sinned when he fell from contemplation," so men of all times and places have, whether willingly or unwillingly, become entangled in the net of the senses.

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But while the materialist compromises with spiritual things, and the idealist compromises with material things, and some men refuse any compromise whatever, it remains clear that all men are concerned to discover the truth. The materialist's denial of the reality of spirit is an affirmation of his belief in the reality of matter, and the idealist's denial of the reality of material things, except as ideas in his own mind, is at least an affirmation of his belief in the reality of his ideas. We are all realists in this sense : that we all believe something is real and the world may be categorically divided into these three classes of men : those who believe in the reality of matter and the validity of sensory experience and who deny the reality of spirit, those who believe in the reality of spirit and deny the reality of matter, and those who believe matter and spirit are both real—that both have existence and matter is not an illusion imposed upon purely spiritual beings or spirit an illusion suffered by beings who have no existence except such as is measurable in terms of time and space.

We are all realists ; we are all moved by enthusiasm to discover and embrace what is real. And however lacking in philosophical exactitude our statement of the case may be, we may agree without misgiving that, however little effort they give to its dialectical exposition, all men desire to live and act in accordance with the truth and all men abhor the notion that there is no truth anywhere discoverable. We are all realists ; but according to our notions of reality so will our works differ. Could there be a world of men in which God, pure being, were universally believed to be the only reality, such a world of men would, without doubt, produce a different civilisation from that produced by a world of men, could there be such, who universally believed the evidences of the senses to be the only valid evidence and matter the only reality—matter having no being but becoming, a flux of measurable motion. I am not here saying that either world would be right or wrong ; I am simply saying that different forms of life, different shapes of things would result according as one or the other notion of the truth were paramount. Nor am I here saying that the things resulting would in either case be better or worse ; I am simply saying that they would be different and that the notion that men are automata whose acts and works do not reflect their thought is as unthinkable as it is historically without foundation.

And if a completely atheist civilisation, could such exist, would inevitably produce different works from a civilisation completely God-fearing, so every civilisation will produce works reflecting the bent of its intellectual enthusiasm. The spiritual enthusiasm of mediaeval Europe, no less than that of more ancient and more modern India, was reflected in its works, its temples, and its laws. If many churches were built it was undoubtedly because many churches were wanted. So great an expenditure of time and treasure could not conceivably have been made upon things considered unimportant. Whatever we may think of their religion or philosophy, we cannot imagine that they would have done or made the same things if they had had different ideas about man's place and destiny. The fact that to-day in England we spend more time and treasure erecting buildings for the conduct of commerce and less in erecting churches does not prove that we have neither religion nor philosophy, but simply that our religion and philosophy are different. We seek reality as much as at any time, but we hold it to reside more certainly in material things, in measurable things, in things

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for which the senses are evidence, than in spiritual things, immeasurable things, things which cannot be proved by experiment. The buildings of commerce are just as much evidence of our state of mind as are the buildings of mediaeval Europe or India.

And what applies to buildings applies equally to all other things made by men. If we confine our attention here to the sphere commonly called art, that is to say, to the sphere of painting and sculpture, music and poetry, it is not because we deny the influence of religion and philosophy in any other spheres, but simply because in the sphere of art the human state of mind is more evident. In artworks the human being is a mentality at work; in such works mentality predominates, is ruler. In other works, as, for example, in the making of bicycles or sewing-machines, mentality plays a subordinate part. Such machines are little more than the contrivances of an ingenious animal. The bicycle is no more ingenious than the dam of a beaver or the hive of a bee, and only more intelligent because it is consciously contrived. In such works man is simply moved by the needs of his animal nature, and he makes such things simply by the use of his physical powers. Such are for the most part the things, the works, for which we have in modern Europe and America most enthusiasm. This does not show that we have no religion or philosophy, but simply that we hold no end to be so excellent or so attainable as material success, and, as many of our writers bear witness, we worship matter with the same emotion that, in other times and places, is aroused by the worship of God. Or shall we say that for us God is Power, but formerly they said God is Love?

We hold, then, that every person and every people is concerned to lay hold of reality and that all the works of men display this concern. We hold that different peoples and different times display different works because among such peoples and in such times different notions of reality have been pursued.

Now the phrase "notion of reality" is simply another way of saying Religion and Philosophy. To say, therefore, that the works of men reflect and are the product of their "notions of reality" is the same as saying that the works of men reflect and are the product of their religion and philosophy. Religion and philosophy are as necessary to the production of such monuments as the Forth Bridge or the Aqueduct at Nîmes as they are to the production of such monuments as the Cathedral of Chartres, the Pyramids of Egypt, or the Temples of Ajanta. But it is not possible to have both kinds of things. You cannot serve two masters or two Gods.

You can have a civilisation which produces works of material power, and incidently, as a kind of hothouse flowers, works of love, and the things called works of art. Such is the civilisation of twentieth-century Europe and America. Its most complete development will be found in Soviet Russia, and nowhere else is the doctrine that works of art reflect and are the product of religion and philosophy more clearly exemplified. The essence of religion is the affirmation of absolute values. In Russia the absolute value of the State is affirmed. The worship of the communal State is the religion of Russia. Italy, Germany, France, England, and the United States of America—each in its degree is following in the same direction. In all these countries the subordination of the individual and the family to the central administration is becoming absolute. In all these countries the value of material power is receiving

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more and more absolute affirmation. The philosophy of materialism is the preamble to this religion of power. The existence of the soul is more and more doubted. When it is at last completely denied, what will be left but the determination to gain the whole world ? Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.

On the other hand, you can have a civilisation which, whether consciously or not, produces, as its primary and most obvious product, works of love and incidentally and in a primitive, amateurish kind of way works of convenience and works of power—e.g. a primitive sort of sanitation, transport by animal power, handlooms and tools such as workmen make for themselves. Such have been the civilisations of all peoples not ruled by men of commerce, of all civilisations informed by a philosophy and religion in which the absolute value of the spiritual is affirmed.

Good men are common in both kinds of civilisation, and in any compromise between the two. It is no part of my contention here that all materialists are wicked men. Nor am I here concerned to say whether a philosophy of materialism contains more or less of truth than one in which the reality of the spiritual is affirmed. It is not here a question of good or bad, of true or false. The whole point of this essay is to show that whatever men do or make, their philosophy and religion are at the back of it, and to affirm that those who deny this are compelled in consequence to admit that the works of men are either the product of purely animal instinct (that the Forth Bridge and the Venus of Milo are no more than a sort of beaver's dams) or they are the product of simple caprice.

It is not that I am saying that the works of men, Hindu or Christian, are good because there is this or that philosophy and religion behind them. I am saying more than that. I am saying that it is because there is this or that philosophy and religion behind them that they are there at all—that it is to this or that philosophy and religion that such works owe their very existence, their very being.

Doubtless there are many actions that men do and even many things that men make, which may plausibly be claimed to be the simple product of animal instinct; for man is a kind of animal even if he be also a kind of spirit. His appetites for food and shelter continue to operate even when his destiny as child of God and inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven is forgotten or denied. He will fly from physical danger even when he will not pursue spiritual safety. He will endeavour to crush what hurts him—as a snake in the grass—even when he will not bestir himself to make things for his delight. Let those who will develop our knowledge of the animal side of men's doings. The psychologists, from McDougall to Freud, may be trusted to leave no avenue unexplored. Everything that can be said for man as animal will be said sooner or later by them. There is no need for anything to be said here.

We take here the ground that, whether or no first in time or place, the most important motives for man's activity in doing or making are neither animal instincts nor caprice. We hold that love is more important and not merely prettier than instinct. Upon such a ground and from such a place of vantage we survey the works of men. We see all things as evidence of love. We make what we love—in accordance with our loves so we make. A pair of scissors, no less than a cathedral or a symphony, is evidence of what we hold good, and therefore lovely, and owes its being to love.

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And this is no high-flown fancy incompatible with hard sense. To cut something, whether it be the cloth of which we would make a coat, or only a thread of cotton, is to do something we hold to be good, and if good therefore Godly, and if Godly therefore lovely. The materialist philosopher sees all things in terms of physical force; for him mathematical laws are the ultimate laws and he seeks to bring into his mesh the whole world of movement and to explain it mathematically. Those, on the other hand, who from the beginning saw all things in God, saw all things in terms of love, and they seek to recapture from the materialist wider and wider and deeper and deeper spheres. I say recapture, for they do but regain what formerly they had. This great tide of materialist philosophy, with its resulting affirmation of the absolute good of material power and its accompanying commercialism and industrialism, mass production and financial rule, is merely a mushroom growth on the face of the earth, and the wide vista opened by the telescope, the depths probed by the microscope, both alike disclose at last nothing but the blank walls enclosing a finite universe. Beyond is nothing—nothing discoverable by experiment, nothing measurable, nothing that the materialist can know.

Nevertheless, materialism is as much a philosophy and a religion as Christianity or Hinduism—a philosophy without metaphysic, a religion without the infinite (for the mathematician infinity is a mathematical trick). But it is a religion, and the productions of post-Reformation Europe are as much religious in their nature as the works of the Middle Ages, or those of Asia.

Insistence on this fact is necessary if we are to understand the works of either East or West, of the present or of the past. And, strange as it may appear at a time when artists profess complete indifference to religion and philosophy, Catholics are the best equipped to gain such understanding, for by the very nature of their religion and philosophy they are able to grasp both extremes. Unlike the Western materialists, "the Church proceeds confidently in her doctrine of God." Unlike the Hindu or the Buddhist, she holds that "matter and spirit are both real and both good." The Catholic can understand and approve the enthusiasm of the materialist for material good and goods, and that of the mystic for spiritual reality and the immersion of the individual soul in the being of God. The supremacy of matter over spirit or of spirit over matter is for the materialist or the idealist only achieved by the denial of the reality of one or the other. For the Catholic, no less religious and no less philosophic than either, the dominance of the spiritual over the material, of mind over matter, is an article of faith, but matter is not, therefore, either evil or an illusion. Neither the errors of the Manichaeans and the Puritans nor those of Bishop Berkeley hold him. The whole history of the Catholic Church is witness to her struggles against this greatest temptation of thinking man—the temptation to the belief that the material life is all or that it is nothing. She emerges from the struggle the arbiter of East and West because she refuses the denials of either.

And the history of Catholic Art shows very clearly the Church's triumphant combination of the extremes. Buildings such as the Church of the Holy Wisdom at Constantinople, and the whole circle of mediaeval cathedrals and abbey churches, are as daring in their acceptance of material exigencies as they are venerable on account

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of their spiritual sensibility. The cathedral church of Chartres or the parish church of St. Pierre in the same city may be viewed by the engineer or the sculptor with equal delight. It is true that the temples of India are great architectural monuments, and it is true that the steel bridges of Europe and America are objects of great beauty. Nevertheless, the temples are witnesses chiefly to the spiritual enthusiasm of contemplatives, and the bridges to the material enthusiasm of men of action. Catholicism gave scope to both enthusiasms.

We are not here concerned to put forward the Roman Catholic religion or the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas as the way, the truth, or the life. Here our business is to show that some philosophy, some religion, is behind all human works and is their primary instigation. Without some philosophy, some religion, nothing is done, nothing made, because nobody knows what to do or what to make, nobody knows what is good or what is bad. It has been said that the Church exists in order that words may have a meaning ; it is also true that without philosophy and religion there is no meaning in human action.

Now it is held by many, especially, of course, by sceptical minds, that whether or no this or that philosophy or religion is or has been the ruling and effective motive in the making of human works, nevertheless such philosophy and religion are of no importance in relation to the works themselves : that, whether the works be good or bad, it is nothing to do with either the religion or philosophy prevalent among the workers. It is held that there is an aesthetic sense which is independent of good or bad, true or false. "A profound sense of form" is said to account for the goodness of the works of mediaeval builders and sculptors. The paintings of Ajanta and the glass of Chartres owe nothing to the ideas prevailing with their makers except their negligible and unintelligible subject-matter. "A profound sense of form !" And what is profound, what sensible, what formal ? The phrase itself is meaningless without religion, without philosophy to gauge height and depth, real and unreal, the seen and the unseen. To such critics the subject is nothing ; to the workman, the artist, the subject is all in all. Unless he knows what he is making he cannot make anything. Whether it be a church or only a toothpick he must know what it is ; he must have it in his mind before he can begin, before he can even choose his material or lay his hand on a tool. And what a thing *is*, what things *are*, and, inevitably, whether they are good or bad, worth making or not, these questions bring him without fail to the necessity of making philosophical and religious decisions. We may accept the conclusions of others ; it may, indeed, be better that we should do so—provided "we know in whom we believe"—but conclusions must be accepted or there can be no beginning. So far from it being true that religion and philosophy have no concern for the artist or he for them, it is only when a religion and philosophy have become the unifying principle of a nation that any great works of art, whether steel bridges or stone shrines, are possible, and the decay of human art follows immediately upon the weakening of men's grasp upon the motives of action. The great art works of twentieth-century Europe are the product of the great materialist erection of post-Reformation, post-Renaissance thought. Without that thought and its enthusiastic acceptance by widespread populations there could be none of those great monuments of engineering and science which, while we may

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deplore the servile labour of the millions of workmen employed in their making, we unite to admire because in themselves they are admirable. Similarly the pyramids of Egypt could not have existed but for the theocracy of the ancient Egyptians, and, while we profess to loathe their system of slave-labour, we rightly admire the pyramids because they are in themselves admirable monuments. So it is with the sculptures of India and Easter Island. So it is with the plain-chant of the Roman Church and the building achievements of the European Middle Age. So indeed it is with wireless telegraphy and the telephone ; and all these things are the product of human activity directed, inspired, controlled, and only made possible by the religion and philosophy of their makers. And the crowning example will be post-Revolution Russia. It remains to be seen in what ways the product will be different from previous human achievements, but one thing is certain : it will be the direct expression of the religious idea and of the philosophy which is the unifying principle, the soul of the Russian Revolution.

Now there are many who say that they like the sculptures of Sanchi, but know nothing of Indian philosophy—that they like the windows of Chartres, but loathe the Catholic religion. They say that they know a good Chinese ivory when they see one, but care nothing for the ideas of Chinamen. They say that they like Westminster Abbey better than the Albert Memorial, but that they are very sure that the ideas of Prince Albert were in every way more enlightened than those of Edward the Third. Therefore, they hold, it is clear that ideas and works have little to do with one another. Thus they come to the conclusion that "a profound sense of form" is all that is required, and that the thing called "form" is independent of intellectual or religious content. This conclusion, however, seems to beg the question, for if a thing has a certain form (and a material thing must have some form) the form must be the right form or the wrong, a good form or a bad, and when we say that a certain thing has right or good form we can only mean that it has the form proper to it if it really is what it purports to be. A profound sense of form means, therefore, a profound sense of what is right form, and that means a profound sense of what form a certain thing, being what it is, ought to have. But to know what form a thing ought to have involves the knowledge of what the thing that is to be made really is, and that involves knowledge of its significance and purpose, the place where it is to go, and the material of which it is to be made. But knowledge of the significance and purpose of things is, for man, i.e. a rational and not merely animal being, conditioned by general as well as particular considerations. And it is precisely a profound sense of these general considerations, as well as of the particulars, which is necessary to the production of any good and right work.

The enlightenment of our time is with regard to the things of interest to a shop-keeping civilisation whose philosophy is materialism. The religion of commercial England finds its profoundest expression in its great works of engineering and applied science. Such a monument as the memorial to Prince Albert in Hyde Park is simply a mistake—a thing the nineteenth century was foolish to attempt. The Albert Bridge across the Thames at Chelsea is that prince's better memorial. On the other hand, the enlightenment of the thirteenth century in Europe, or of the fifth century before Christ

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in India, was with regard to the things of interest to men among whom commerce was little developed and even less venerated. We have princes of commerce; they had princes of states. We have soap and marmalade kings ; they had kings of men. They believed in a future life for which this life was a preparation—a life described in terms of love : as, for instance, that heaven consists in the marriage of the soul with God, that eternal bliss consists in the union of the lover and the beloved. We believe that this life is all.

The religion and philosophy of mediaeval Europe or India find their profoundest expression therefore in quite different works from ours. We do wrong to compare the Albert Memorial with Westminster Abbey, or the Houses of Parliament with the tope of Sanchi. We do wrong because we do ourselves an injustice. Imitation Gothic architecture is a monument to our sentimental regard for our ancient past and does not represent the religion and philosophy which inspire our civilisation. But, for example, the bridge across the St. Laurence at Quebec (an improved version of the bridge across the Firth of Forth) will stand comparison with any Gothic cathedral or Eastern temple.. And in making such a comparison the important, the fundamental, part borne by religion and philosophy in the conception and execution of human works becomes evident. Would such a thing as the Quebec bridge have been built at any other time than ours or under the inspiration and direction of any other enthusiasms ? Could the church at Chartres have come out of any other womb than that of the Catholic religion ? But there is Catholicism to-day and there were moneylenders in the eleventh century. Yes, but Catholicism is as powerless to-day as moneylenders were despised then. Catholicism is powerless now because it commands nothing but its altars and its confessionals. Financiers were powerless then because they commanded nothing but their gold and went about in danger of their skins. These things were all changed because religion and philosophy were changed. Among the early Christians the desire of money was held to be the root of all evil ; to-day, that desire is instilled into every schoolboy. This may be right or wrong, but it cannot be called the same. And as religion and philosophy lose their hold on men's minds, so the works done under their inspiration become decadent—fanciful, vulgar, pretty, elegant, extravagant, grandiose—until a new religion and a new philosophy enthrall us and a new enthusiasm inspires new works.

These things being so, the whole business of modern "art" education is clearly foolishness, and a stumbling-block to artists. Painting and sculpture, music and letters are in our time necessarily idiosyncratic. The works of men which we call works of "art" are necessarily merely "self-expression." Our age expresses itself best in great communal works of mechanical skill. These are our works of art. The factory is our art-school. Painting and sculptures are for us mere ornaments, mere fal-lals suitable for museums. There is no public place for them. They mean nothing to anybody but their makers and a coterie of aesthetes.

And strange as it may seem, painters and sculptors were not very great dukes even in mediaeval Europe or India. The great works of those ages also were great communal efforts. There was no such thing as a school specially devoted to the learning of a thing called art. Buildings and workshops were their art-schools, and the ideas to be expressed, made manifest in material, were not specially those of the work-

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men but, as to-day in the case of science and mechanics, of whole populations. Individual prowess was doubtless applauded, but it was seen in right perspective—a thing of small importance compared with the right-thinking of the community. A mediaeval cathedral, like the Quebec bridge or a common microscope, expresses the genius of a people.

And if our steel engineering may stand comparison with mediaeval stone building, inasmuch as both are authentic expressions of the peoples who made them, and show the differences of religion and philosophy in our age as compared with another, so may the works of mediaeval Europe be compared with those of the Hindus and Buddhists. But in this case what is chiefly notable is similarity, not difference. Hindu and mediaeval images are the same in *kind*. Both are made according to hieratic canon, both are devoid of idiosyncrasy. Both are negligent of anatomical verisimilitude. Both are of public rather than private significance. Both are concerned with the expression of conceptions of general importance and widespread belief and not with personal and particular likings. "Life-like" portraiture is rare (the Great Seal of Henry IV is identical with that of Henry V except for the change of numerals—they are symbols of the King rather than of *a* king—and the countless images of the Buddha are like no individual). Both are entirely inaesthetic, in the sense that in neither case were the artists consciously concerned to produce things of beauty for beauty's sake. Beauty in both cases is the radiance of things made as they ought to be made. The best works and the best periods are those in which the nature of the thing to be made is best known and most poignantly expressed—the time and the place and the loved one all together.

There are many bad works in all periods of human history, and in all cases their ugliness is a privation—they are lacking in what they ought to have. Bad works are simply the product of men who do not know what they are making or who do not care. An early Christian crucifix is a better work of art because it is a better crucifix. Look after goodness and truth, and beauty will take care of itself.

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Maiden awaiting her lover (Kangra).

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Her friend tells the maiden that her lover awaits her (Mewar).

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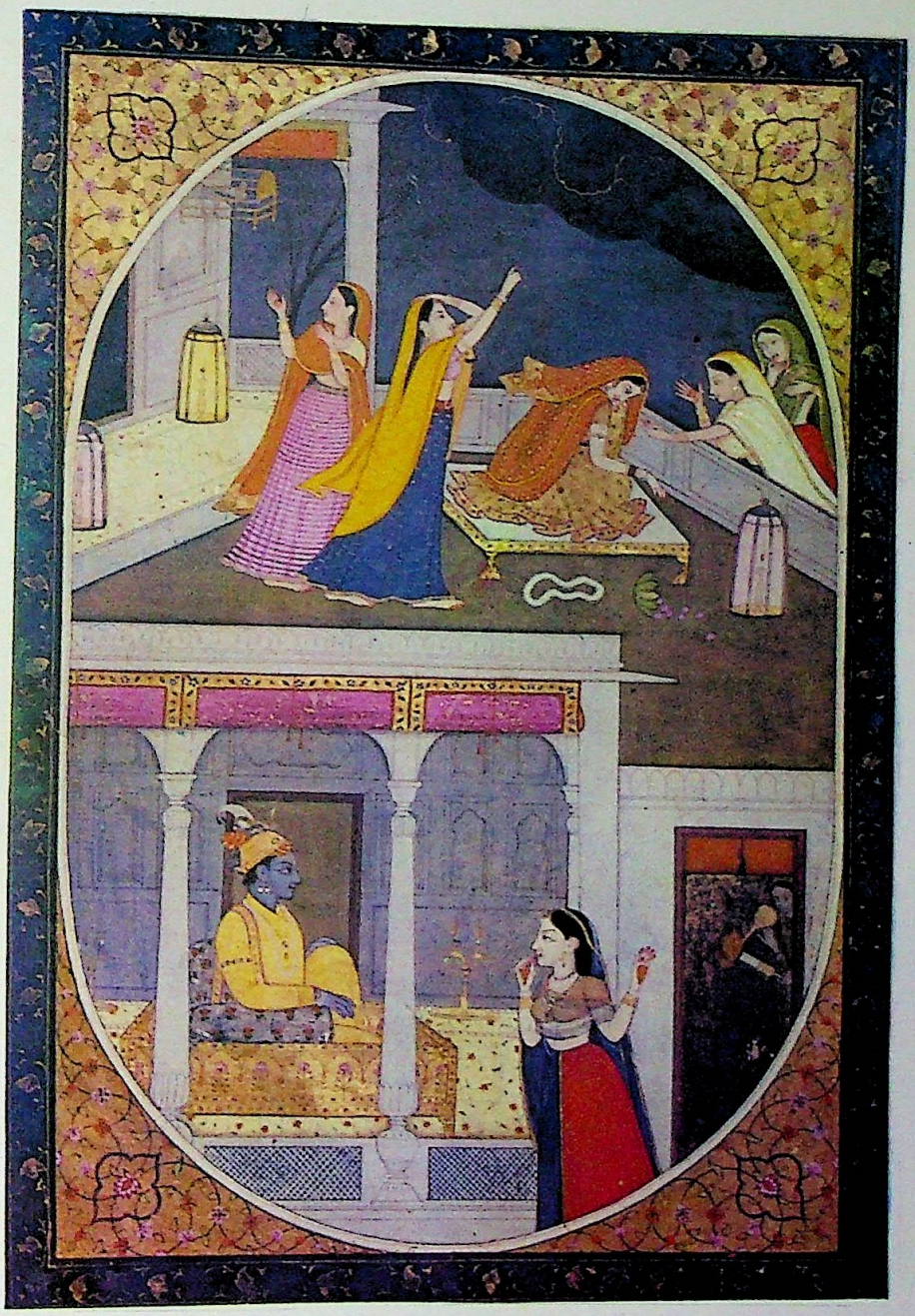

Messenger tells Krishna that Radha is offended with him (Kangra).

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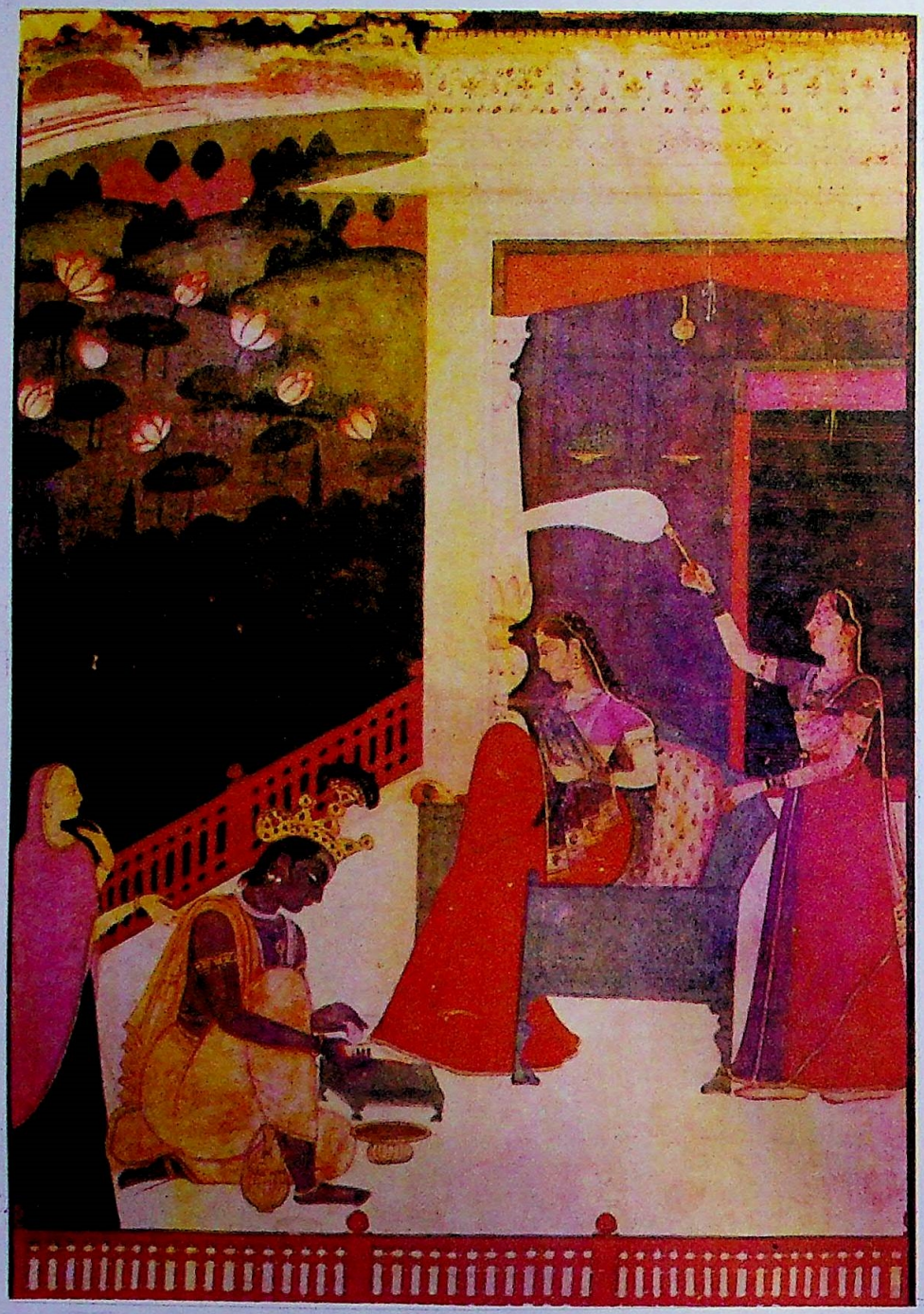

Krishna Painting the feet of Radha (Kangra).

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PRELIMINARY

THE Hindu view of art is the Hindu view of life, life as interpreted by religion and philosophy. There is in the Sanskrit language no exact equivalent for the word art as it is used in modern European languages, for art in India has seldom been understood in the modern Western sense of art for art's sake. In this country, traditionally dominated by the urge to seek for and adore a reality more real than that offered by sensible or intellectual experience, art has been consecrated to the service of the intuitively realised ideal of a religious philosophy and a philosophical religion.

For the most part it has been an hieratic art executed to meet the demands of the temple in obedience to priestly dictation. The priests had evolved a canon for the proper making of sacred objects ; the *Silpin*, or the skilled workman, attached to the temple, who may more correctly be called in English terms artisan, craftsman, or manual worker than "artist," merely followed these traditional methods handed down from father to son and son to son in pupillary succession.[1] I shall show later how the canon, seeking to control and drill the artisan's instruments of expression into a perfect harmony with the profundity of his vision, recognised the contribution which he might himself make to create a living tradition, instead of merely following archaic conventions ; but here it must be clearly understood that his individual genius was not given the egotistical importance that is today attached to it in the West. Rather it was merged into the anonymity of the guilds, the quality of whose joint workmanship represents in its evenness the true spirit whether good or bad, of the society which it served and the age in which it lived and worked.

Although, in the main, Indian art has been produced in obedience to the hieratic canon, a great body of industrial and narrative art has been and still is executed in India by private individuals, either as a personal accomplishment or to supply other wants of the community than those specifically connected with the temple. But, since all life is for the Hindus a sacrament, the same ideal of religion and philosophy, which is the goal of priestly art, dominated all other forms of art too, and where it did not dominate the term Hindu, applied to the art of India, ceases to apply.

To give the authority of religion and philosophy to industrial and narrative arts and crafts the view was evolved, with remarkable ingenuity, that the *Vedas* (the oldest holy books of the Hindus) were *Sruti*, heard or revealed, and as such the media through which God, the Cosmic Soul, the Higher Self of man, had revealed His inexhaustible

[1] "In the powerful social structure of mediaeval civilisation (too) the artist ranked simply as an artisan" (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, p. 21). Also "the artistic representation of sacred objects was a science governed by fixed laws which could not be broken at the dictates of individual imagination" (Mâle, *Religious Art of the Thirteenth Century in France*). The Greeks also followed a canon. Polykleitos (440-410 B.C.), for instance, wrote a treatise on proportion on the basis of certain Egyptian rules of art, and there was a code attributed to Vitruvius which is said to have been followed by Leonardo da Vinci and Lysippus.

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source of truth to the Vedic poets. *Vac*, the Divine Word, it was said, had entered the poet's mind and inspired him to utter those urgings of the vaster life that are crystallised in the holy books.[1] The burden of this whole doctrine is that God is in man and nature, lying about us as a vast world of the As-yet-Unknown, Infinite and Inexhaustible, waiting to be recognised. All our knowledge consists in the discovery of the forms in which He has already manifested Himself, rather than in the creation of any new truth. At first, God, the All-pervasive Cosmic Self, created the world and entered it out of sheer excess of joy—that is to say, He split Himself, His Oneness, into the manyness of the universe, because He found joy in creating, because in so doing He realised Himself; then just as He had realised joy in creating diversity out of His Oneness, in manifesting Himself in many phases, so there arose in the universe of diversity, in the heart of finite humanity, the urge to realise joy by creating Oneness out of its manyness, unity out of its multiplicity, the Infinite out of its finitude. By the very necessity of our desire to attain the unity of God, by the very impulse to seek Perfection in the Divine Being, to realise, to return back to the essence out of which we have sprung, we try thus to enlarge the contours of our souls by reading the message of the Infinite in everything and by setting down our answer to it through art and literature.[2]

As this view and others like it are in the mind of every artist in India, whether he be a great painter or a poor carpenter, there is in all Indian art a constancy of religious motives. Everything has a Divine meaning, and no element of life is treated for its own sake. The figures, the trees, the flowers, the birds are all taken from the conditions of natural life, but they are all removed into the realms of celestial life. Every little detail in a picture, on a statue, or on a pot is a symbol, a gesture to God that men see Him in everything, a message to men that God has given to everything a Divine significance. And since everything is thus seen through the God-intoxicated imagination, realism in the European sense has no place in Indian art; the general process employed by the artist being one of deliberate visualisation of the essential quality of the thing he has in mind to execute before he begins the task of technical elaboration. And even in portraiture recourse is had to the image recollected in tranquillity, rather than to the memory image taken direct from nature.[3]

There is no distinction between the "fine," the "decorative," the "secular," and the "canonical" arts. All art is one, and its goal the beauty of the Divine Life.[4]

Thus although, in spite of the preponderatingly disparate aims and methods of Indian and modern European craftsmen, foreigners can enjoy the monuments of India from the point of view of their particular aesthetics, we are not entitled by the demands

[1] The sense in which the Hindus regard their holy books to be revealed would seem to be similar to that expressed by Hegel: "Revelation is the realisation of God in man's intelligent nature."

[2] "The word," says St. Augustine, "is in a way the art of the Almighty God. And by the word the whole Divine work was done, *omnia per ipsum facta sunt*. It is through His word and His art that God attains, controls, realises everything He does. And in the same way it is through His art that the human artist ought to attain, control, and realise his work" (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*).

[3] "Art abides entirely on the side of the mind" (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*).

[4] "Art should so dominate our lives that we might say: there are no works of art, but art only. For art is then a way of life" (Herbert Read).

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of an internal as opposed to an external crtiticism to look to India for an aesthetic apart from religion and philosophy,—the Hindu view of art is, I repeat, the Hindu view of life, life as interpreted by religion and philosophy.

What exactly is the Hindu view of life and what precisely is the aesthetic implicit in it? The detailed answer to this question will be attempted in the main body of this essay. Meanwhile, in order briefly to indicate the general nature of my thesis I may provisionally answer the question here, in terms of the dominant Vedantic school of Hindu thought.

The Hindus commonly regard the ordinary phenomenal world, not as reality which is an Absolute, infinite, unconditioned state of Being (God), knowledge of which is derived rather through intuition than through sense-perception, but as becoming the relative aspect of the infinite truth known to us under the limitations of our reason and ratiocination, the Unknowable as we know It. This conception of the world as the Appearance (*Maya*) of the Unknowable Reality, God, is familiar to the learned and the unlearned alike in India. But the Unknowable Reality, or God, is not imagined as a huge giant sitting in the heavens beyond the skies, on a golden throne, surrounded by a host of angels and fairies. Everybody, even the most illiterate peasant, knows that God is in man and nature, the essence of man's being, his Higher Self, the essence behind nature. He is understood to be in man and nature, however not quantitatively but qualitatively, not physically but spiritually. He is in man and nature as the numerical unit one is, for instance, in all the other numerical terms, two, three, four, five, six, seven, etc., or as the idea of a new invention is in the invented machine, or a scheme for a political or social reform is in the actual benefits that accrue from that reform. He is a unity, an ideal, an order. He is the essential spirit behind the world of matter manifested in the world of matter. That is to say, the body of man and the body of nature is the body of God.

If God is in man and nature, how, it may be asked, does the distinction between Reality and Appearance, Being and Becoming, Infinite and finite, arise? The answer to this question is plainly this, that the Infinite, who is essentially spirit, although pervading the universe and entering it, remains separate and self-complete, as the numeral one remains itself and separate in its oneness, although pervading and entering other numbers. It is an element, an aspect, a unit, a self-realised, self-contained, boundaryless whole. The finite forms of God, all the things of the universe that partake of His nature, are thus necessarily incomplete, limited, as contrasted with the Unlimited, the Infinite. Man, who in his higher nature partakes of the spirit of God, has, in the process of creation and evolution, lost the essential Infinity of his Higher Self in the complexity, the chaos, and the disorder of the world, and become enshrouded in the veils of illusory experience, by acquiring certain habits of feeling, action, and thought which he never suspects to be unreal until he questions life and the things around him.[1] His customary preoccupations with practical ends and the necessity of understanding the behaviour of the things among which he lives lead to a mistaken belief in, and emphasis on, the material outside world.

[1] "On account of our perversity and vanity knowledge is often an obstacle to the Holy Spirit" (Maritain, *Prayer and Intelligence*).

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The Hindus insist, therefore, that man should maintain a proper balance within the world of Reality-Appearance, Infinite-finite. Lest the experience of the senses, of vitality, and of rational thought drown man in the ocean of limitations and enslave him so that he loses his higher nature, his God-Self, altogether, they recommend that he should question life and the things around him and set aside all the habits of feeling, activity, and thought, see through and break down the mental barriers which these habits have set upon the God, the Pure Being within him. Thus, by contemplation on the Infinite Soul within him, and without him, he will realise a vision of the Divine order and acquire the Divine virtues and be enabled to preserve a proper balance between his God-Self and his human-self in leading his ordinary worldly life,[1] until he attains complete salvation from the cycle of birth and re-birth.

The intuitive realisation of Reality, God, the Higher Self, is, however, only acquired after an arduous religious practice, for man with his over-dependence on the senses and vitality, and with his pride of intellect, is so imbued with the habits of sensible, conative, and intellectual experience that he does not realise how in spite of their great value as sources of knowledge these three faculties are essentially limited until he actually subjects himself to a severe analysis by reflection or pure contemplation. Two ways of the religious life are, therefore, enjoined on him, two ways of restoring the balance within the Infinite-finite. The first of these is the way of renouncing the world and all its obligations for a time in order to engage in solitary contemplation (away from all worldly distractions), and the gradual realisation of the distinction between the unreal worldly self and the Real Higher Self. If successful, the ascetic becomes Self-conscious, and is freed from the contingencies of individuality —that is to say, he ceases in reflection to be a person in the psychological sense and becomes, as it were, one with the Absolute Cosmic Consciousness. Having realised Enlightenment, that is with the balance between the God and the man in him restored, he can come back to live the ordinary worldly life until he is absolutely freed from it. The second way is the way of disinterestedness, dispassionate performance of good deeds while living the ordinary worldly life and the acquirement of the Higher Self and the Divine attributes through constant prayer and meditation exercised according to the rules of Hindu religious ritual for *Yoga* or union.[2]

This is the fundamental idealism of Hindu religion and philosophy; and, although the terms of its statement vary considerably as we turn the pages of India's cultural history from the earliest times to the present day, it nevertheless runs through all the bewildering multiplicity of Indian thought like a constant stream, rising and falling, no doubt, with every fresh turn of the tide, narrow at places and broad at others, yet in the main running constantly, in spite of the hurdles put in its way by the materialist schools.

And, since this fundamental conception of the Cosmic Life has been the very climate in which man's thought has been nourished in India through the ages, every word, every thought, every deed of the Hindu life is related to and flows from it.

[1] "The starting-point of human knowledge is to be found in the highest type of knowledge—the intuition of the Pure Being" (Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion*).

[2] "Ceremonies are the outward expression of inward feeling" (Lao Tzu).

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The Hindu conception of beauty is thus implicit in the very definition of the God-Self of man as *Ananda* (pure joy, bliss), which is the vast indefinable goal of all human endeavour and aspiration, and which we seek to realise by contemplation of its manifold differentiations of forms.

The *Bhagavad-Gita*, a little treatise appended to the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, confirms this doctrine, when Shri Krishna, the figurative and metaphorical symbol of the Cosmic Soul, gives an exposition of the mystery of creation. He declares that He creates and pervades "the whole universe." The eternal qualities of man's ratiocination, the qualities which man recognises as Divine, are really only aspects of His Soul. Beauty is one such quality. "For whatsoever is . . . beautiful . . . understand thou that to go forth from a fragment of my Splendour."[1] In essence, beauty is really His chief quality, indistinguishable from His Supreme Being, for He says further : "I am the Splendour of splendid things."[2]

Here, then, in a language plain enough for ordinary folk, is set forth the view that beauty is only one of the many aspects of the Cosmic Soul. Philosophy tries to realise it impersonally through intuition, religion seeks to realise it through the worship of its personal incarnations, and art, which is a method which both of them employ, seeks to express its spirit through representations of its comprehensible aspects, to realise it expressionistically. The studio of the Hindu artist is, therefore, not different from the poet-philosopher's hermitage, or the poet-priest's temple. In each, man is concerned to find Oneness by contemplation on the many. In each, he is struggling to emancipate himself from the self with its multifarious relationships into the Absolute Not-Self. In each, he seeks to realise the Supreme Soul and its essence, eternal bliss.

But how precisely is this ideal of Pure Joy and Beauty to be realised? The question was asked and an answer supplied in an art-treatise called the *Vishnudharmottaram*. " Vajra said : The Supreme Being has been described as devoid of form, smell, and emotion, and destitute of sound and touch : how, then, can a form of Him be made ?" "Markendeya replied: *Prakriti* (universal matter) and *Vikriti* (the forms of that matter) came into existence through variation in the form of the Supreme Soul. That form of Him which is scarcely to be seen was (manifested and) called Matter. The universe (thus presents) the aspects of Him when endowed with form. Worship and meditation of the Supreme Being are possible (for human beings) only when He is endowed with form (because human beings are limited and finite). But the highest condition of the Supreme Soul is to be imagined without form."[3]

Thus it was that precisely in a world of idealistic thought recourse was had to idolatry, the worship of forms and images as representations of the Divine Being. A symbolist technique was invented to express the various qualities of the Supreme

[1] "The Being of all things derives from the Divine Beauty" (St. Thomas Aquinas).
"Beauty is a unique ray of the celestial brightness" (Ludwig Tieck).

[2] "God is beautiful. He is the most beautiful of beings, because as Denys the Aeropagite and St. Thomas explain, His beauty is without alteration or vicissitude, without increase or diminution, and because it is, not like the beauty of things, which have all a particularised beauty, *particulatum pulchristudinem sicut et particulatum naturam*, He is beautiful by Himself, absolutely Beautiful" (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*).

[3] *Vishnudharmottaram*, edited Stella Kramrisch.

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Soul, and externalised form was given to Him in imaginary Superhuman types formed by the juxtaposition of bodily elements taken from the norm of human and natural life. Anthropomorphic images thus came to be in India, as they did in Greece, representations of spiritual powers. Only, however, in India the artists did not embody their conceptions of God in the shapes of men and women as the Greeks did; but, insisting on the transcendence of God over men, the Hindus always portrayed Him as a Superman, someone beyond men. Hence, the many-headed gods and many-armed goddesses of the Hindus, which, seeking to represent an eternal abstract ideal of beauty, have no exact counterpart in nature, and are purely mental creations," works of pure design."[1]

An elaborate psychology of religious ritual had been outlined in Hindu sacred literature on the principle that by worshipping the God man becomes the God. The main form which this ritualistic worship took was called *Yoga*,[2] the method of contemplation on some mental conception (*dhyana-mantra*) of the Supreme Being either in imagination or by the fixture of attention on a physical image of the Deity into which a particular mental conception (*dhyana-mantra*) had been translated by the artist. Since the artist had to translate mental conceptions of God into physical images and forms, the method of *Yoga* (contemplation) was enjoined on him as a technical procedure, so that he might visualise the mental form which he sought to represent in all its details vividly, before he set out to enshrine it in a concrete image to serve as an aid to meditation in the temple. The myth behind the image is recalled.

A theory of beauty was expressly worked out in connection with poetry, drama, and the dance, by the interpretation of the professed ideal of religion and philosophy, *Ananda* (joy) as *Rasa* (the delight experienced through a work of art). And this conception of *Ananda* (joy) as *Rasa* (delight), from the concrete evidence of its use as a criterion of the art of painting, may be considered as equally applicable to sculpture, architecture and the other arts.

Since, then, there is an overlapping of the ideal of religion and philosophy with the ideal of art, it becomes necessary to undertake a survey of the former before the latter can be properly comprehended.

To an exposition of the chief religious and philosophical conceptions of the Hindus, therefore, I propose to address myself, before I treat of Implied aesthetics and to the principles of artistic practice enjoined in the *Silpa-shastras* (Art-treatises). Throughout the course of my survey of the religio-philosophical conceptions I shall explain the symbolism of the main Hindu gods and goddesses, and shall draw the aesthetic implications of theological and metaphysical doctrine, wherever it is possible to do so, from Indian literature. The religio-philosophical survey might thus partake of the nature both of a chapter on the Hindu pantheon and of a history of the Hindu view of art.

[1] Denman Ross, *A Theory of Pure Design*.

[2] The word *Yoga* is used to cover two meanings, which must be carefully distinguished. It signifies (*a*) the ideal of union with God, (*b*) the method of contemplation employed to secure such a union. In a general way, as I shall show later, it is not different from what has often enough been vaguely recognised by European artists and writers: "I often think one ought to be able to pray before one works—and then leave it to the Lord. Isn't it hard to come to grips with one's imagination—throw everything overboard? I always feel as though I stood naked for the fire of Almighty God to go through me—and it's rather an awful feeling. One has to be so terribly religious in order to be an artist" (D. H. Lawrence, *Letters*).

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PART ONE

THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESIS

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SECTION ONE

THE VEDA

(1)

IN tracing the development of the chief religious and philosophical conceptions of the Hindus with a view to showing their aesthetic implications, I shall take my start from the invasion of India by the first contingent of the Aryan hordes from the plateaux of Central Asia, since the precise character of the civilisation, of which traces have been found at Mohenjo-Daro, in the Indus valley, has not yet been determined, and the aboriginal Dravidian culture, which certainly flourished when the Aryans came down, was completely assimilated by them, and may thus be considered as their inheritance, lending itself to more convenient consideration as part and parcel of our Vedic heritage rather than as distinct from it.

Looked at through the haze of time, the beginnings of the Indo-Aryan civilisation seem to have been lost in the dim sphere of mythology. There is not the slightest certainty about the time of its origin, although scholars have sometimes adduced evidence and sometimes made speculative guesses to show that it began about five millenniums before the birth of Christ. But whatever the date of its origin, it is certain that it was a joint product of Dravidian and Aryan cultures. We do not know whether the Dravidians were the original neolithic inhabitants of India or came to the country like the Aryans as invaders, but we do know that the Aryans —the tall, handsome, fair-skinned nomads from the wilds of Central Asia—had long searched for lands where they might win easy bread for themselves, and find plenteous pastures for their sheep ; where they might roam under friendlier skies, or settle down among abundant waters. Filtering into the rich plains of northern India they found what they wanted. Nature had here showered her gifts of fruit and flower with a bounteous hand. The long ranges of the Himalayas, stalwart sentinels, stood guarding the country from attack on one side, the roaring seas protected it on the other, and between them there were rivers to quench the thirst of its vast plains, and to make them burst out in all their glorious robes of green grass and many-coloured flowers. The seasons melted here like the soft water-colours on the palette of a supreme artist, and each element of the picturesque scene seemed to glow bright like a jewel. The nomads put an end to their wandering life and settled down at last in the fertile plains. The land of the five rivers was their first stronghold, but

[1] The Vedic Aryans did not use images in worship but relied on the sound of poetry to extend consciousness. The square form of sacrificial altar was inherited through the centuries, as symbol static, pace, from within which energy is born.

[2] Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilisation*. Probsthain, 1932.
See also Ram Prashad Chanda, "The Indus Valley in the Vedic Period," *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 31.

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gradually they spread the waves of their conquest towards the Gangetic valley, not only winning that rich alluvial country, and subjugating its dark-skinned inhabitants, but being also won over by them both.

The evidence of comparative mythology indicates that these Aryans had certain religious poetry floating on the surface of their keen memories before they descended upon India, but it is certain that the first flush of delight of the Aryan consciousness at its communion with the prodigal nature of India became early crystallised in a number of descriptive nature poems as they progressed towards the Gangetic valley.

So far, however, all this poetry had been orally transmitted from father to son, and from son to son The shock of intercourse with the alien culture of the Dravidians evoked in the conquerors the desire to preserve their literary inheritance, and although during the time it took to give it a permanent shape it became strongly mixed with aboriginal Dravidian belief, this was the way that the Vedas, the oldest books of the Hindus, came to be composed.

As a whole, the *Veda, sruti* (heard or revealed), was compiled during a long period from about 1500 B.C. to 500 B.C., and includes the following extensive literature: (1) The four Vedas proper, *Rig, Sama, Yajur, Atharva,* which are "hymns, prayers, and sacred formulas, offered by priests to the gods on behalf of rich lay-sacrificers, charms for witchcraft, medicine, and other homely practices, manipulated by magicians and medicine-men, in the main for the plainer people."[1] (2) The *Brahmanas,* which are "expositions of the sacrifice, illustrated by legends in the manner of the Jewish Talmud."[2] (3) The *Aranyakas,* including the Upanishads, which contain "speculations of the higher sort, philosophic, cosmic, psycho-physical, and theosophic, gradually growing up with and out of simpler beliefs."[3] (4) The *Sutras,* which are treatises "containing a considerable body of set rules for conduct in everyday life, at home and abroad, that is a distinct literature of customs and laws."[4]

Of the Vedas proper, the *Rig* is the most important as the first document of ancient Indian literature. It consists of about a thousand hymns dedicated in the main to the gods, both those of the original Aryan invention and those of the Non-Aryan deities whom the Aryans borrowed from the Dravidians. The Aryan gods are mostly nature gods. The elements fire, water, air, and earth have been deified, as also their actions and interactions on each other. The motive which inspired the poets seems to have been the feeling of awe in the face of gigantic natural phenomena, and wonder at its magnificence. The human mind clothes its own reactions to experience with form. Out of the thin stuff of memory and imagination are evolved the concrete forms and images of supernatural powers. The Aryans conceived these gods anthropomorphically, and described them as wearing clothes, bearing arms, and riding in chariots. Sometimes the Rig-Vedic poets offer "primaeval, childlike, naive prayers" to these very daemons of fancy that they have exorcised from their minds and planted on the high pedestal of god-hood. Sometimes they discuss the aspects which have led to the formulation of the various gods—the "allegorical representations of the

[1] Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda,* p. 25.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

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Supreme Deity." But, throughout the Vedas, the poets (being also priests) have the ends of the sacrifice in view, the sacrifice where these hymns are to be sung. The hymns partake, therefore, of the nature of appeals to the gods to protect men in their troubles, and their spirit is well described in the formula :

I give to thee that thou mayest give to me.

Of the gods invoked in the Veda, the following are the chief: Dyaus or Dyaus Pitar, sky or father sky; Surya and Savitar, Vishnu, the sun-god Ushs, the dawn; Agni, the fire; Prithvi, the earth; Soma, the intoxicating vegetable juice used in ritual; Indra, the god of lightning and thunder; Varuna, the universal embracer and encompasser; Adityas, boundless ones; Asvins, horsemen; Vayu, the wind; Rudra, the fierce god of destruction and waste, etc. This list was considerably enlarged as the Aryans continued to assimilate the gods and goddesses of the Non-Aryan inhabitants of India.

As the Aryans not only borrowed their deities from the Non-Aryans but learnt from them the way to indulge in the esoteric intimacies of *Yoga* (union with god) through the practice of *Bhakti* (devotional worship), the contribution of the latter towards the formation of the culture on which the conquerors stamped their name must be emphasised. The Dravidians were by far the most predominant portion of the population, and had attained a high degree of culture long before the Aryans entered India. They had built up devotional cults of the phallus and of nature spirits and mother goddesses (Yaksas and Nagas), and possessed themselves of an elaborate pantheon, which, as I have said, the Aryans slowly adopted. They had evolved a philosophy of *Karma* (deeds), that good and bad actions in the past life govern the nature of birth and rebirth in *Samsara* (the Universe); and they had cultivated several industrial arts and crafts, and perhaps made and used images for worship, and raised secular and religious structures of wood, brick, and stone.

If the Aryans owed so much to the Dravidians, what, it may be asked, is the net result of their own individual contribution ?

I think the nature and extent of their achievement may, for lack of any very conclusive evidence, be judged from Vedic literature to be twofold: (1) in regard to theology, and (2) in respect of speculative thought.

When the acceptance of the numerous deities of the aborigines enlarged the Aryan pantheon there seems to have arisen in the Aryan mind an urge for simplicity, for in the later hymns of the *Rig-Veda* polytheistic anthropomorphism seems to have been definitely questioned: "To what gods shall we offer an oblation ?" asks the poet. The answer sometimes is: "Varuna is the heaven, Varuna the earth, Varuna is the universe and all besides"; sometimes Brihaspati or Hiranyagarbha is the supreme, and a theism seems to be implied. At other times it is declared that the "real is One, the learned call it by different names," and we are sure that a strong pantheism prevails. These two conflicting tendencies run all through the *Rig-Veda*, although towards the end of it Varuna, as the ideal of theism, gives place to Indra, Krishna, and Mitra respectively, Brihaspati to Brahma the creator, and the belief in individual

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gods as alternatively the highest among the number of deities, which Max Müller called henotheism, replaces the earlier pantheism.

In the domain of philosophy, at first sight, the achievement of the Aryans would seem to be rather dim. For man's questionings of nature, as reflected in such ejaculations as: "Where is the sun by night?" "Where go the stars by day?" "Why does not the sun fall down?" "Of the two, the night and the day, which is the earlier, which the later?" "Whence comes the mind, whither goes it?" etc., seem to be the naïve, simple questionings of a child as compared to the mature doctrines of *Karma* (the doing of good or bad deeds as governing birth and rebirth in *Samsara*, Universe), etc., of the Dravidians. But the postulation towards the end of the *Rig-Veda* of an Absolute Reality (God) as partaking of two ultimate entities, matter and soul, is, it must be recognised, a very great contribution indeed by the Aryans to the history of early speculative thought:

Non-being then existed not, nor being:
There was no air, nor heaven which is beyond it.
What motion was there? Where? By whom directed?
Was water there and fathomless abysses?

Death then existed not nor life immortal;
Of neither night nor day was any semblance.
The One breathed calm and windless by self-impulse:
There was not anything beyond it.

Darkness at first was covered by darkness;
This universe was indistinct and fluid.
The empty space that by the void was hidden,
That One was by the force of heat engendered.

Desire, then, at first arose within it,
Desire, which was the earliest seed of spirit.
The bond of Being, in Non-being sages
Discovered searchings in their hearts with wisdom.

Who knows it truly? Who can here declare it?
Whence was it born? Whence issued this creation?
And did the Gods appear with its production?
But, then, who knows from whence it has arisen?

This world-creation whence it has arisen,
Or whether it has been produced or not,
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He only knows it or even he does not know it.[1]

The profound effect of the two strains of Vedic culture, the Aryan and the Dravidian, as they were fused together into a perfect whole by gradual stages, will become obvious

[1] *Rig-Veda*, X. 129.

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as I trace the development of subsequent philosophy and religion. Meanwhile, let me proceed to notice the aesthetic implied in these two strains of India's ancient culture separately, as they were still more or less distinct and unmixed.

The Aryans as they descended upon India "were proficient in carpentry, building houses, and racing chariots of wood ; and in metalwork, making vessels of *ayas*, presumably copper, for domestic and ritual use, and using gold jewellery. They wove, knew sewing and tanning, and made pottery. The early books afford no evidence of the making of images of any kind ; on the other hand, it is impossible to suppose that the manufactures alluded to above were devoid of significant decoration. In all probability, the early art was decorative or more accurately abstract and symbolical."[1]

It seems to me that this account of the arts of the Aryans fits in plausibly with the Vedic conception of beauty, implied in the word *Sri*, frequently used in the *Rig-Veda*, as primarily that of brilliance, splendour, and adornment of the work, or of wealth, success, and welfare of the worker.[2] The test of the artisan's work seems to have been how skilful it was. This was the ideal the poet had in mind when he compared his creation to the skilfully designed chariot of a clever carpenter, or to the beautifully woven cloth of an accomplished weaver, or to a bride adorned for her lover.

Dravidians had, as we have seen, evolved cults of the phallus, and of mother goddesses (Yaksas and Nagas), and other nature spirits. They practised many of the arts, and also, perhaps, employed images in the worship of their cults. "Worshippers of the *Sisna* are mentioned with disapproval in the Vedas,"[3] and a "prehistoric symbol is illustrated by Foote."[4] The character of these images, if the Dravidians used them, must have been predominantly primitive, earthy, and natural. They must have been moulded in the simplest and the crudest shapes out of the very earth they stood upon, and stamped with all the qualities of natural power which surrounded Dravidian man. On this hypothesis of the primitive character of Dravidian art alone is later art to be explained. For if we acknowledge Aryan art to be abstract and symbolical in Stryzgowski's sense, adopted by Dr. Coomaraswamy, the presumption that "Indian art and culture was a joint creation of the Dravidian and Aryan genius, a welding together of symbolic and representative, abstract and explicit language and thought,"[5] follows as a matter of course.

(2)

During the period of the transition from the *Rig-Veda* to the Upanishads, through the *Sama-*, *Yajur-*, *Atharva-Vedas* and the *Brahmanas*, a gradual reconciliation between the Aryan and the Dravidian cultures was going on. But it was a very slow process, the natural animosity of the white conquerors and the black conquered being still a

[1] Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 8.
[2] Oldenberg, "Vedic Words for Beautiful," etc., *Rupam*, No. 32, October 1927.
[3] Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 8.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*

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handicap to intimate social intercourse, so that the Aryan quest for a monotheistic belief continued side by side with the Dravidian worship of many gods. In one respect, however, a noteworthy fusion was soon achieved. The simple ritual of the *Rig-Veda* had now, under the influence of Dravidian methods of worship, become an elaborate system of sacrificial rites and ceremonies in the *Brahmanas*. The ideal of theosophy that was suggested in the subtle doctrine of the self-diremption of the Absolute into subject and object, soul and matter, in the hymn of creation, and the belief in One Supreme Cosmic Being whom the sages called in many ways, was expressly made the basis of a very definite psychology of religious ritual. The soul of nature was declared in the *Brahmanas* to be one with the soul of man, both being of the essence of the higher reality, the One Being. So the elements of the rite were identified with the elements of the Universe, the priest allying himself with Nature in all her moods, by making the syllables of the *mantras* (hymns or prayer verses) represent the seasons, the details of the sacrificial hearth signify the organs of the human body, the number of oblations denote the months. And in the lyrical spirit of that tender humanism which has coloured the course of Hinduism from the earliest times to the present day, underneath the abstract ritual, it was recognised that since our finite natures cannot without difficulty conceive the infinite, the attempt should be made to comprehend its significance through the contemplation of its various symbolised aspects, of course, it was held that the "vulgar look for their gods in water, men of wider knowledge in celestial bodies; the ignorant in wood, bricks, or stones: but the wisest in the universal self."

It must be noted here, however, that the use of icons was no essential part of the priestly ritual of the Vedas, only symbols untouched by human craftsmanship being used during sacrificial and other ceremonies ; and that though rude images of worship were used by the Dravidians, the art of sculpture was not yet a vehicle for the expression of spiritual ideas. We have to wait until the austere intellectualism of the Upanishads, Buddhism, and Jainism had given place to the warm theology of Hindu devotional cults in Epic times and later, to see the psychic currents of man's soul supply the mainsprings of plastic creation. Meanwhile, although Hinduism was in germ in the growth of devotional cults and of the caste system, the predominant preoccupation of men until the eight century B.C. were the mental struggles of the dwellers in the forests—the sages of the Upanishads.

(3)

In the Upanishads the Aryans made their first constructive attempt to formulate a philosophy of life. They accepted the Dravidian doctrine of *Karma* (deeds) as governing the nature of birth and rebirth in *Samsara* (the universe), and declared *Moksha* (release from the cycle of birth and rebirth realised through direct spiritual experience, brought about by contemplation) to be the goal of life.

The Upanishads are computed at a hundred and eight, but there are ten main ones on which later writers commented and from which all the different schools of Hindu thought have sought their sustenance. Professor Paul Deussen has arranged

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these in the following order :

1. Ancient Upanishads : *Brihadaranyaka, Chandogya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Kaushitaki, Kena* (partly in prose).
2. Verse Upanishads : *Isa, Katha, Mundaka, Svetasvatara.*
3. Later prose : *Prasna* and *Maitrayani.*[1]

The dates of their composition vary, but the oldest of them began to be written about 800 B.C. when the Vedic hymns were nearing completion and the latest was recorded about 500 B.C., when Buddhism arose.

It is impossible to disentangle the threads of ethical, religious, social, and metaphysical inquiries that are inextricably intermingled in the poetic-philosophic utterances that constitute the storehouse of learning of these Upanishads, but their general spirit may be described as the search for truth in life : "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality," prays the sage in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*[2]

The character of the fundamental problem is postulated as any one might postulate it when he suddenly turns self-conscious : "Whence are we born, where do we live, and whither do we go ?" asks the Upanishadic poet. And he attempts the solution of the problem in some such way as this :

At first he asks who he is himself, what he is, who and what is man. Upon reflection he finds that there are various selves of man ; for instance : (1) the sensational self which feels ; (2) the energetic self which acts ; (3) the mental self which thinks ; (4) the transcendental self which enjoys intuition. Of these it seems to him that the first three are less real than the fourth, because they are limited, because all the information that they give is only partially true, because all the judgments they enable us to make are made in terms of, or in relation to, other things, not about the thing as it really is ; while the fourth self (that is the God-self) realised through intuition gives us absolute knowledge. But the first three selves are forms of the Absolute Higher self (*Atman*, God), because the Higher Self, or God, Parmatman expresses Himself through them, because they are His functions: "He (*Atman*, or God) is the person of the eye, the eye itself is the instrument of seeing. He who knows let me smell this, He is the Self, the nose is the instrument of smelling," etc.[3] The Higher Self, *Atman*, God, is Universal. "There is no second outside It, no other distinct term."[4]

It cannot, however, be apprehended by the senses and defined in the terms of our ordinary, limited, human vocabulary : "The Soul which is not this and that, nor aught else, is intangible, for it cannot be laid hold of."[5] "It is unseen, transcendent, inapprehensible, uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, the sole essence of the consciousness of the Self, the completion of the World, the ever-peaceful, all-blissful, the one unit, this indeed is *Atman.*"[6]

Having realised the nature of the Real Self as it is reflected in man, the philosopher

[1] *Philosophy of the Upanishads.*
[2] *Brh. Up.*, VIII. 12.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, IV. 3. 23.
[5] *Chand. Up.*, VIII. 1. 3.
[6] *Mundaka Up.*, 1. 7.

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turns to nature. What is nature? What is the reality behind the phenomenal universe? After analysis he finds that the very essence which is behind the three superficial forms of his mind is also behind the superficies of nature. And as, in its subjective character, he called this essence *Atman*, so in its objective aspect he calls it *Brahman*. In a dialogue between a son and a father in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, the mystery of *Brahman* is exposed by the father thus: "That from which beings are born, that in which when born they live, and that into which they enter at death, that is *Brahman*."[1] After giving this definition, the father asked the son to think of the stuff which would fit into this conception. Whereupon the son first mistakes matter to be the *Brahman*. On failing to find an explanation for the human mind on this hypothesis he declares the mind or intelligence itself to be the final Reality. Confronted, however, with the impossibility of explaining animal intelligence on the human mind principle, he fixes upon the senses which man and beast have in common and declares them to be the Ultimate Essence of all things. Even this is unsatisfactory, for it does not embrace intellectual ideas, of which we have distinct knowledge, apart from the senses, i.e. by the exercise of rational thought. But our intellect has already been proved to be limited. It is therefore resolved that the *Brahman* (Reality) is not comprehended by thought, but realised through intuition.

The essence of *Atman* (Self) and *Brahman* (Reality) when actually realised is called *Ananda* (the state of Pure Bliss). It is the unity (of God) in which the *Atman* (Self) becomes *Brahman* (Reality), and *Brahman* (Reality) becomes *Atman* (Self). It is the Omniscient,[2] Omnipresent,[3] Omnipotent,[4] Everlasting,[5] Timeless,[6] Changeless,[7] Invisible,[8] Incomprehensible,[9] Supreme Spirit,[10] immanent in *Atman* (man) and *Brahman* (nature),[11] yet transcending all things.[12] "As all spokes are contained in the axle, and in the fellies of a wheel, thus also all beings and all gods, all worlds and all organs, also are contained in that Self (*Ananda*)."[13] Logically it is indefinable because in the Supreme Soul all descriptions cease. Subjet, object, ends, and causes, all fade away into the mystery of Divine ecstasy. All we can say about God is negative: *Neti! Neti!* (It is not this, It is not that): the only positive assertion possible being the one which the mystic saint makes when he comes face to face with Him: "That art Thou."

Ananda, the Supreme Soul, "creates the world and enters it,"[14] so that "the

[1] *Taittiriya Up.*, III. 1.

[2] The *Atman-Brahman-Ananda* is similar in description to the God of the Bible, although, of course, the Upanishadic God is an abstract idea, while the Christian God was supposed to be incarnated in man. But it may be interesting to note the passages from the Bible about the qualities to God which are similar to the ones mentioned in the Upanishads. I quote the statement about God's omniscience first:

"All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13).

[3] "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. xix. 6).

[4] "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord" (Jer. xxiii. 24).

[5] "From Everlasting to Everlasting thou art God" (Psa. xc. 2).

[6] "The High and Lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity" (Isa. lvii. 15).

[7] "For I the Lord change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Mal. iii. 6).

[8] "For He endured, as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27).

[9] "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job xi. 7).

[10] "God is a Spirit" (John iv. 24).

[11] "One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. iv. 6).

[12] "Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings viii. 27).

[13] *Brh. Up.*, XI. 5. 15.

[14] *Ibid.*, IV. 7.

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World is full of Him." "All shines after Him that shines. By His radiance is all this illumined."[1] And what is called *Maya*, the appearance or illusion of the phenomenal world, is nothing but the manifestation of His person. The world is full of Him. Only it is full of Him qualitatively, not quantitatively, for in a physical way God is separate from humanity and from the world which humanity inhabits, separated by the duality that divides the manifester from His manifested forms. The ordinary world is the endless sea of life, in which the cycle of birth and rebirth keeps on revolving according to the automatic laws of *Karma* (deeds): "One becomes good through good deeds, evil through evil deeds," for "man is altogether desire; as is his desire so is his insight; as is his insight so is his deed; as is his deed so is his destiny."[2] If the human being by following the dictates of his better self acts himself out disinterestedly enough as a good man, all the influences which have gone to mould his character are then assimilated into a Perfect Self; then "as the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, so a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the Divine Person who is beyond all,"[3] thus attaining release or salvation in deathlessness.

The Vedic gods melted here into an abstract philosophical Absolute. But there was one remarkable qualification attached to this philosophical Divinity. The Upanishads endorsed the emotional mystical method of *Yoga* (which the Aryans borrowed from the Dravidians, who originally practised it in ritualistic worship) as the way of realisation of this Absolute. The poet-philosophers were aware of the difficulties which beset the human mind in the task of God-realisation. If we are to apprehend Reality (God) correctly, we are enjoined, therefore, to cast off the veil of the lower self, that is to question all the feelings, desires, and thoughts which we have acquired. The acquirement of a clean, impersonal mind is a necessity for the seeker after truth, and *Yoga* (contemplation) is suggested as a method for the achievement of this end. Men should not depend over-much on worldly experience, and should intensify the inner self by deep meditation, so that there be "no difference left between what is within and what is without." Sometimes a rigid course of mental and physical discipline is inculcated to sharpen the inner faculties. For instance, in the *Prasna Upanishad* the sage Pippalda prescribes another year of discipline to six searchers after truth: "Go ye and spend another year in leading the life of celibacy, in practising asceticism, and in cherishing reverential faith." The *Katha Upanishad* says that God is realised "when the five sources of knowledge are at rest along with the mind and the intellect is active." It is also sometimes suggested that the *yogin* condition can be realised through the control of breath.[4] The most common *Yoga* method enjoined in the Upanishads is, however, the strict control of passions and emotions and the fixture of attention on either mystic symbols or words such as *Aum*, *Tandavanam*, *Taggalam*, etc. "Having taken the bow furnished by the Upanishads, the great

[1] *Mundaka Up.*, II. 2. 10.
[2] *Brh. Up.*, III. 2. 13. The Hindu order of morality is conceived in a slightly different manner from the Christian. According to the Hindus it does not matter to God whether men are good or bad because God is above all human considerations of morality.
[3] *Mundaka*, III. 2. 8.
[4] *Brh. Up.*, I. 5. 23.

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weapon, and fixed in it the arrow rendered pointed by constant meditation, and having drawn it with the mind fixed on the *Brahman* (Reality), aim, happy youth, at that mark, the immortal *Brahman,*"[1] the *Mundaka Upanishad* exhorts us. The blissful ecstasy of the union of the self with Self when realised is compared to the pleasure of earthly lovers in self-forgetful dalliance.

The endorsement of this *Yoga* method, however, did not imply the use of images in devotional worship in the manner in which the Dravidians practised it. The teaching of the Upanishads is rigid and austere, and expressly disapproves of ritualistic worship. The goal of life is release from the bondage of the senses and the attainment of the peace of the soul, the realisation of *Ananda,* the pure bliss of *Atman* (Higher Self) and *Brahman* (Ultimate Reality), and the way to this goal lies through the pure contemplation of spiritual Truth in *Sannyasa* (ascetic withdrawal from life).[2]

Art has thus no place in the Upanishadic scheme of life and is looked down upon as the source of sensual pleasure. But this does not mean that the arts were not practised in the Upanishadic Age. In fact, the naïve art practices of early Vedic times seem from the Upanishads to have definitely advanced. The knowledge of metals had developed. "Tin, lead, and silver are mentioned in the Upanishads, besides the *ayas* (iron or copper). Cotton, linen, silk, and woollen garments were worn; a linen robe used in the *Rajasuya* (coronation) ceremony was embroidered with representations of ritual vessels. Storied buildings are mentioned. Round and Conic square conic huts, bricks, plates, cups, and spoons of gold and silver, iron knives, needles, mirrors, elevated bedsteads, thrones and seats, musical instruments, millstones, turbans (worn by the King in the *Rajasuya* ceremony and by students after graduation), crown, jewellery, earthernware, and a ship are mentioned in connection with rituals. Writing, no doubt of an early Brahmi character, must have been known in the eighth century B.C. or earlier,"[3] and the discovery of a nude female figure on a small repoussé gold plaque, representing, probably, the earth goddess at the site of Vedic burial mounds of the seventh or eight century B.C., suggests that images of "fine workmanship"[4] had come to be used in worship. For the truth is that, commendable as the evolution of a metaphysical conception of the Absolute out of the Vedic pantheon may have been thought from the point of view of the higher religion of philosophy, it must have seemed rather too heavy for the human heart, used to the worship and adoration of the concrete shapes and forms of beneficent gods, to the fear and propitiation of the evil powers of dread demons. So that although the lofty idealism that was conceived in the Upanishads passed like a dogma into the currency of everyday life in India, it passed not undiluted by the fanciful elaborations of the

[1] *Mundaka Up.*, II. 2. 2.

[2] The way in which the Upanishads preferred contemplation of truth in ascetic withdrawal from life has counterparts in Christian philosophy. For instance, St. Thomas says that "absolutely speaking and in itself the contemplative life is better than the active" (*Ethics*, X. 7, 8). St. Augustine recognised the same fact: "It is true," he said, "that the occupations of the active life sometimes turn us away from contemplation." Pére Lallemant has written that "all that is necessary is the renunciation once for all of all our interests and satisfactions, all our designs and projects, so as to depend henceforth solely on the good pleasure of God" (*Spiritual Doctrine*).

[3] Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, pp. 9,10.

[4] Codrington, *Ancient India*, pp. 7-8.

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Dravidian and Vedic Aryan imagination which so well suited the demands of practical religion. We have seen how, during the period of the *Brahmanas*, the worship of many gods was going on side by side with the speculations about the One God. During Upanishadic times this practice continued. Meanwhile, the development by the Aryans of the several religious cults which they borrowed from the Dravidians had been going on for some time, and Brahmanical theism, which in Epic and post-Epic times was to become the chief vehicle of Hindu thought, was in germ. The personal god of each devotional cult was already beginning to be assigned certain impersonal qualities and attributes in order that religious practice might be reconciled with popular belief on the one hand and with Upanishadic philosophy on the other.

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SECTION TWO

BUDDHISM

A PHILOSOPHY so subtle and divorced from life (from life as it is understood by the mass of ordinary men and women) as the Upanishadic, was bound in time to evoke a reaction in favour of some more humanistic belief. Among the various revolts which thus inevitably sprang up, two were most important in the centuries before Christ—Buddhism and Jainism.

In order precisely to understand the significance for Hindu aesthetics of both these systems, it is essential to note that, since the age in which they were founded was marked by an increasing emphasis on the individual aspect of truth, the two religions became closely bound up with the lives of their authors. A biographical survey of both Gautama and Mahavira, therefore, automatically becomes an exposition of their respective religions.

Gautama "Buddha" (the Enlightened),[1] as he was called by his followers, born somewhere about 567 B.C., was heir to the royal house of the Sakyas, who ruled a small state in the Himalayas, situated between Nepal and Oudh, from their capital, Kapilavastu. His father's name was Suddhodana, and on his birth he was given the name of Siddhartha (one who has realised his ideal). His mother, Mayapati, died when he was barely seven days old, and he was brought up in the lap of an unusually kind stepmother. A prophecy was made when he was a child that he would either be a world conqueror or a great spiritual teacher, and as he early showed speculative leanings, his father, fearing the actualisation of the second alternative suggested by the astrologers, summoned all the resources of his immense wealth to ensure him the delights of a splendorous existence, and made of his each night and day a round of pleasure. He had as many as three palaces built for him, for use respectively in winter, summer, and the rainy season, and early married him to his lovely cousin, Yasodhara. It was decreed that when the Prince Siddhartha rode out in his chariot for recreation, no sign of misery and suffering should be allowed to meet his blissfully innocent gaze. But the artificiality of such a concocted scheme could hardly conceal the misery which is inseparable from life! As the Prince was driving to his pleasure-ground one day he saw an old man broken with age. On another occasion he saw a man suffering from a terrible disease. And still another time he came across a decomposed corpse, and he was filled with bitter remorse and cried out: "Shame then on life, since the decay of every living thing is inevitable." Some time later he was struck by the calm and peaceful bearing of a monk, and resolved to live an ascetic's life, to renounce his princedom, and thereby to secure complete release from the

[1] Throughout this survey of Buddhism I shall have in mind the *Lalita-Vistara* (a legendary life of the Buddha), illustrated in the reliefs of Borobudur and used by Sir Edwin Arnold as the basis for his beautiful poem, *The Light of Asia*.

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trammels of existence. Having bathed in the river, he was mounting his chariot determined to go and ask his father's permission to turn ascetic when the news arrived that his wife, Yasodhara, had given birth to a son. Siddhartha was no doubt shaken in his new belief a little, and reflecting on the newborn infant, called him Rahula (Hindrance); but then with cool deliberation decided: "This is a new and strong tie I shall have to break." On reaching home he was, of course, greeted by the people of Kapilavastu with great enthusiasm as the happy father of an heir, but he paid no heed to the felicitous applause of the populace, and kept firm in his inner resolve to abdicate. That very night, as he lay uneasily awake, bored by the festivities around him, he was "roused into activity like a man who is told his house is on fire," and prepared to depart. Dreading that the strong guards whom his father had placed outside his palace would prevent his escape he called out to see who was at the gates. By a lucky coincidence, Channa, his sympathetic charioteer, kept guard that night, and called back in reply. Assured at least of the removal of one chief obstacle, Siddhartha ordered Channa to saddle his horse. Then, desiring to have a last look at his child, he gently opened Yasodhara's bedroom door. As he peeped in he saw that she was asleep with her arms around the child, and for a moment he stood torn between the desire to go and take up his child in his arms for the last time and the fear of disturbing the sleep of the mother and the child. At length he persuaded himself with great difficulty to kill the desire and obey the fear. And consoling himself with the thought that he would come back to his home as soon as he became "Enlightened," not only as husband and father, but as teacher and saviour, he went out of the regal city which held all his potential worldly power, wealth, and love, into the solitude of the bordering forests with Channa as his only companion.

On reaching the banks of the river Anoma, Siddhartha cut off his beautiful, long, flowing locks of hair, cast off his ornaments, and assuming the mode of a *sannyasi* (ascetic), sent Channa with his horse and valuables back to Kapilavastu. For a week he rested under a mango grove, then walked on into the fastnesses of the Himalayas, visiting one hermitage after another, and learning the tenets of Hindu philosophy from Brahman poet-priests. Dissatisfied, however, with his spiritual progress, he sought a forest retreat in the Uravala range of the Himalayas, and gathering five disciples about him gave himself to the most rigorous austerities and self-torture. His fame as a prince ascetic spread "like the sound of a great bell hung in the canopy of the skies." Greatly enfeebled physically, however, one day he swooned away and the people thought he was dead; but he rose, and feeling that the severity of his asceticism had brought him no nearer his goal he gave up renunciation and resumed the life of a wandering friar, visiting the neighbouring villages.

One day he is said to have seen an encouraging portent. Sujata, a herdsman's daughter, had brought him a golden cup filled with rice. He ate the rice and threw the bowl into the river that ran by. The vessel danced upwards against the current, a fact which Siddhartha interpreted as a good omen promising the attainment of his goal. That day he sat down under the Bo tree (the tree of wisdom), deep in meditation.

A dramatisation of his mental condition as he sat contemplating suggests the struggles he had to go through in order to realise his goal. Mara, the evil tempter,

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who had once appeared to him when he had just left home with a promise that he would give Siddhartha the kingdom of the four continents if the Prince would give up his quest, now appeared again and sought to unsettle him. He offered first to bring order into his father's kingdom, where his cousin Devadatta had risen in revolt against his father, but it was no temptation to Gautama, who believed rather in being good and in doing good. Mara and his demon hosts then inaugurated a storm of fire, stones, and the sand to torture him, but to the *Yogi* these seemed like a gentle rain of flowers. The tempter, frustrated in his design, laid claim to the seat which Gautama occupied, and asked his hosts to witness to his right, but the Prince touched the Earth and called her to witness to his right, which was at length proved. Infuriated by this, Mara made his last attempt. He sent his three daughters, Longing, Passion, and Desire, to tempt Gautama with their beautiful forms, their soft music, and their accomplished dancing; but they had no effect on Siddhartha, devoted to his ideal. He was rewarded by a vision of perfection, and became the Buddha, the "Enlightened."

He immediately set off for Banaras, where he hoped to proclaim his new discovery to his five old disciples, who he knew now lived in that city. On reaching there he unfolded the following philosophy of life to his friends: All corporeal things are material, and therefore doomed to decay and dissolution. Since man lives in the world of matter, he suffers, decays, and dies. So long, therefore, as he does not renounce his unholy desires he will be continually subject to longing, weariness, and cares. It is fruitless to try to purify the body by mortification of the flesh and self-torture, for it is the moral evil that enslaves man in the cage of his body. The performance of good deeds does indeed procure man some material advantage as he moves in the cycle of birth and rebirth, but it is only by the complete eradication of all evil that we can hope to go to the "other side," to *Nirvana*, the final emancipation from birth and death. Four great truths should be observed by every aspirant to release: (1) misery always accompanies happiness in existence; (2) all modes of existence result from passion and desire; (3) the denial of desire is the only means of escape from existence; (4) complete freedom is achieved by the fourfold "paths," which are: (*a*) the awakening of hearts, signifying the mental stage when men and women realise that earthly occupations are inalienably suffused with sorrow; (*b*) the recognition by men of the fact that not only impure desires, but also revengeful feelings are to be got rid of; (*c*) to strive to free oneself from all evil desires, ignorance, doubt, heresy, unkindliness, vexation, etc.; (*d*) the final stage, *Nirvana*, may then be reached by the saint who has practised the first three "paths."

Having converted his five disciples and a number of other people at Banaras, the Buddha dispatched them to go and proclaim the gospel of his faith in different parts of India, himself retiring to the village of Sena in the deserts of Uravala. Here at a seminary of philosophers and scholars he delivered his first sermon and converted many people to his religion, including the Brahmin sage Kashyapa, who became one of his most well-known devotees. Thence he went on to Rajagriha, where all Kashyapa's followers accepted Buddhism. Here he received a request from his father to come to Kapilavastu and he repaired thither and converted the royal family to

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his faith. Rahula, his son, became a monk, and Yasodhara, his wife, was admitted to the order of nuns.

In the twentieth year of his "enlightenment," his cousin Ananda joined him, and was his devoted companion through life, and successor at his death, which occurred in the eightieth year of his life, in 487 B.C., at Kusinagara, a town about 120 miles north-east of Banaras.

Almost the last words the Buddha uttered to his disciple Ananda, who had shown signs of personal distress at the loss that was threatened to him by the master's death, were :

> Therefore, O Ananda, be ye a lamp unto yourself. Be ye a refuge to yourself. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp.

The austere ideal implied in his injunctions continued to dominate early Buddhism, and a vague sort of ban lay on all art, which was considered as motivated by the senses as mere emphemeral pleasure. Buddha himself is said to have forbidden all the images of him. The psychological attitude of early Buddhist aesthetics is clearly summed up in the *Vissuddhi Magga:* "Living beings, on account of their love and devotion to the sensations excited by forms and the objects of sense, give high honour to painters, musicians, perfumers, cooks, and elixir-prescribing physicians, and other like persons who furnish us with objects of sense." "Beauty is nothing to me," says the *Dasa Dhamma Sutta,* "neither the beauty of the body, nor that which comes of dress," and it enjoins "form, sound, taste, smell, touch, these intoxicate beings; cut off the yearning which is inherent in them."

The stringency of this view is hardly to be wondered at, if we consider that art at this time was motivated by the vaporous emotions of pleasure-loving people. This was an age predominantly of gay and splendours living in the feudal courts. The seductive charms of lovely women, "adorned, garlanded, and redolent of sandalwood," are a favourite theme of the refined connoisseurs of Buddhist literature, and even "the dry, hieratic prose of the texts of sermons which enumerate the impressions of beauty, (collect) together scores of synonyms, all of which express the sense of pleasure."[1]

Thus the monks of the brotherhood were expressly forbidden to paint pictures on the walls of the monasteries, symbols of wreaths, and creepers in stupas, which were enjoined by the Buddha for worship,[2] alone being allowed as aids to meditation. Only four chief events in the life of the Buddha were illustrated in early Buddhist art : (1) the conception, nativity, or the great renunciation, i.e. the going forth of the Buddha from Kapilavastu, symbolised by elephant, lotus, bull, gate, horse, respectively ; (2) the Great Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, represented by the Bodhi tree with rail ; (3) the first sermon at Sarnath, shown by wheel or deer ; and (4) the final release, *Nirvana,* at Kusinagara, symbolised by the stupa. It is probable, however, that all the places which were in any way connected with the Buddha soon became places of pilgrimage, and "it is most likely that the very beginnings of Buddhist

[1] Oldenberg, "Vedic Words for Beautiful," etc., *Rupam,* No. 32, October 1927.
[2] See Ram Prashad Chanda, "The Beginnings of Art in Eastern India," *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India.* Also Coomaraswamy, *Yaksas.*

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art are to be recognised in formal stamped symbols, or tokens carried away by pilgrims as memorials of their visits to the sacred sites."[1]

The passage of time, however, dulled the enthusiasm of the Buddhists for the monasticism implied in the earlier ideal of passionless search for truth. Buddhism no longer remained a code of ethics the first century after its proclamation, but became a popular religious system, and it was profoundly influenced by Brahmanical theism, which had made great strides forward from its inception in the Vedic period to the end of the Epic period. The ritual of the Gnostic Brahmans could not but have appealed to the large mass of lay Buddhists forced into a sort of agnosticism by the abstruse doctrines of their clergy. The Hindu psychological truth prevailed that the human adorer wants concrete image to adore, rather than to explore the void of metaphysical subtleties. Most of the converts to the faith of Buddha were from the lower castes of Hindu society, as also the aboriginal jungle people, and they had evolved anthropormorphic images of tree spirits, snake spirits, fauns, fairies and demons. They brought these images over slowly into the stupa shrines of their new religion. On the model of the Brahmanical pantheon was developed a vast pantheon of the *Mahayana* (greater vehicle) Buddhism, as against the *Hinayana* (lesser vehicle) Buddhism. Buddha, who had always regarded himself as one in a long line of Boddhisatvas (potentially capable of becoming Buddhas), was worshipped as a manifestation of Infinite Light. He was the Adi- (supreme) Buddha, corresponding to the Hindu Ishvara, or Brahma the creator ; the One who had split Himself into the many when the desire of *prajna* (divine wisdom) arose within Him, and who, in the event of realising *prajna*, became manifest in the universe in the forms of the five Dhyani-Buddhas—Vairochana, Akshobya, Ratna-Sambhava, Amitabha, and Amogha-Siddha. From each of these Dhyani-Buddhas had proceeded five Dhyani-Boddhisatvas—Samanta-Bhadra, Vajra-pani, Ratna-pani, Padma-pani, and Visva-pani, who all helped in the process of the evolution of the universe and its maintenance. One of the Dhyani-Boddhisatvas, Padma-pani, was called Avalokitesvara, and worshipped just like the god Vishnu of Vaishnava Hinduism as creator and preserver.

In the second and third centuries B.C. the members of this elaborate pantheon came to be illustrated through the use of icons and images in the same way as the gods of the Hindu pantheon had probably been illustrated towards the end of Vedic times, and Buddhist art sought succour from the doctrines of *bhakti* (devotional worship) in order to secure redemption, just as the art of Hindu devotional cults sought inspiration from *bhakti* (love and devotion) to secure *Yoga* (union with God).

Mahayana Buddhism had emphasised the great importance of the ideal of *Yoga*, which had now been codified as a system by Patanjali, and as Buddha had been known to have practised it, and to have realised "Enlightenment" through it, Buddhist artists seeking to express the popular devotion to Buddha as the Divine ideal always presented him as seated in the *Yogi* attitude so beautifully described in the *Bhagavad-Gita* :

Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of Indian Collections*, Parts I and II, Boston. See also Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art.*

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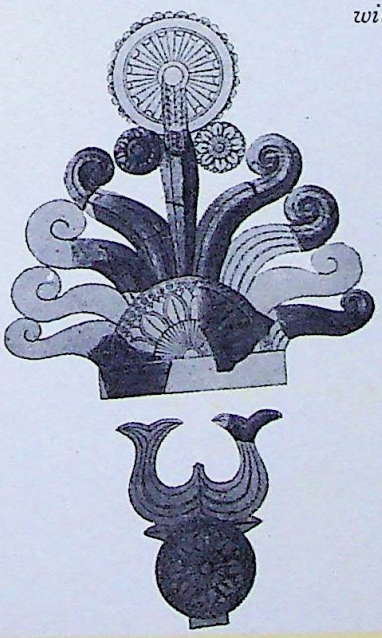
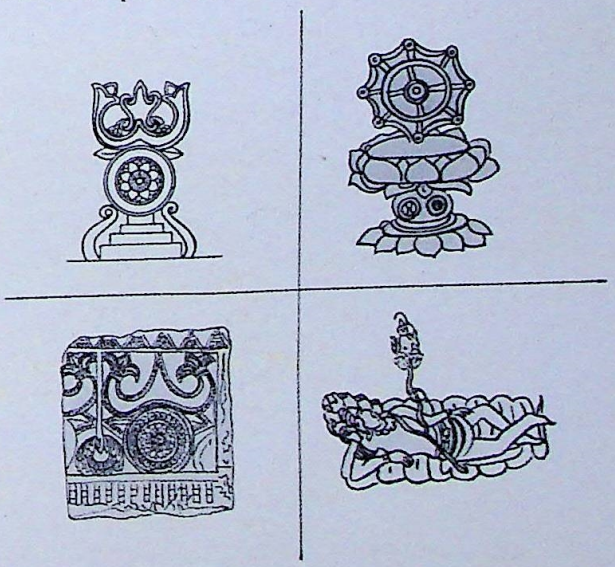
Seal from Mohenjodaro showing Shiva with trident shape crown.





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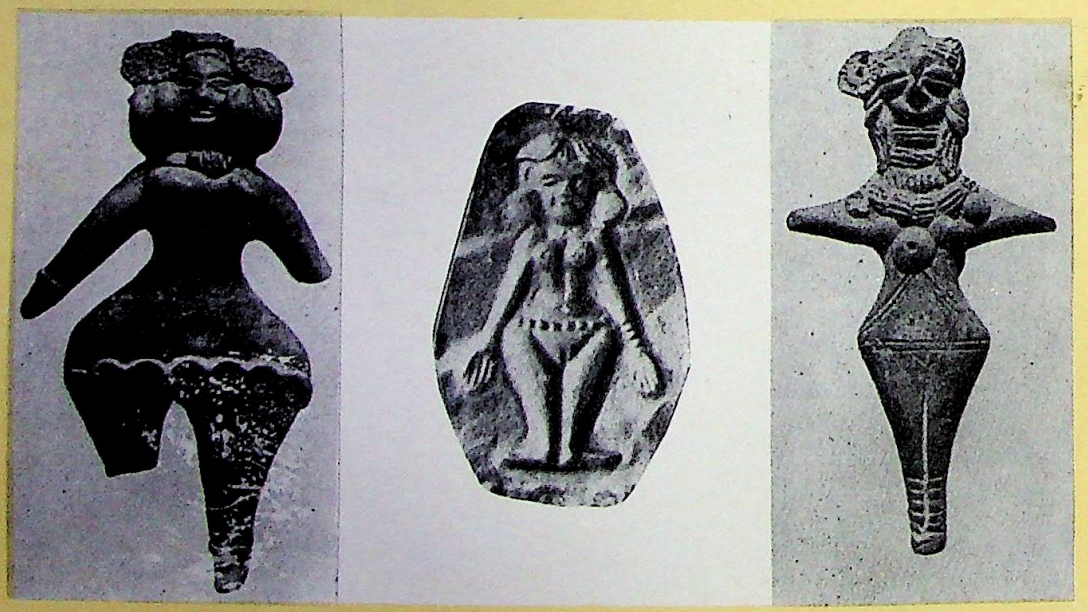
Mother Goddess from Inamgaon.



Mother Goddess figurines.

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Maheshmardhini from Mahabalipuram.

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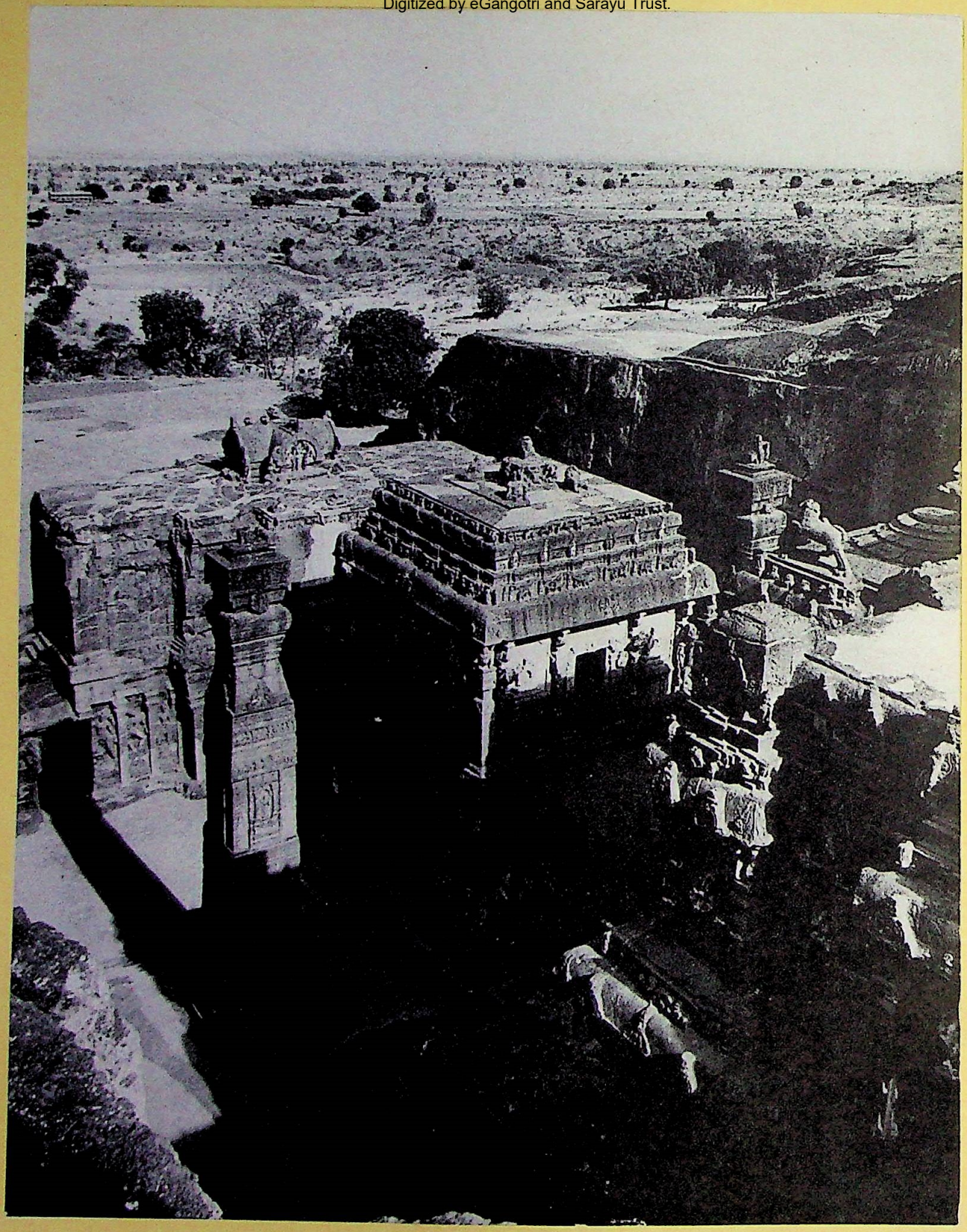

Kailasha Temple, Ellora.

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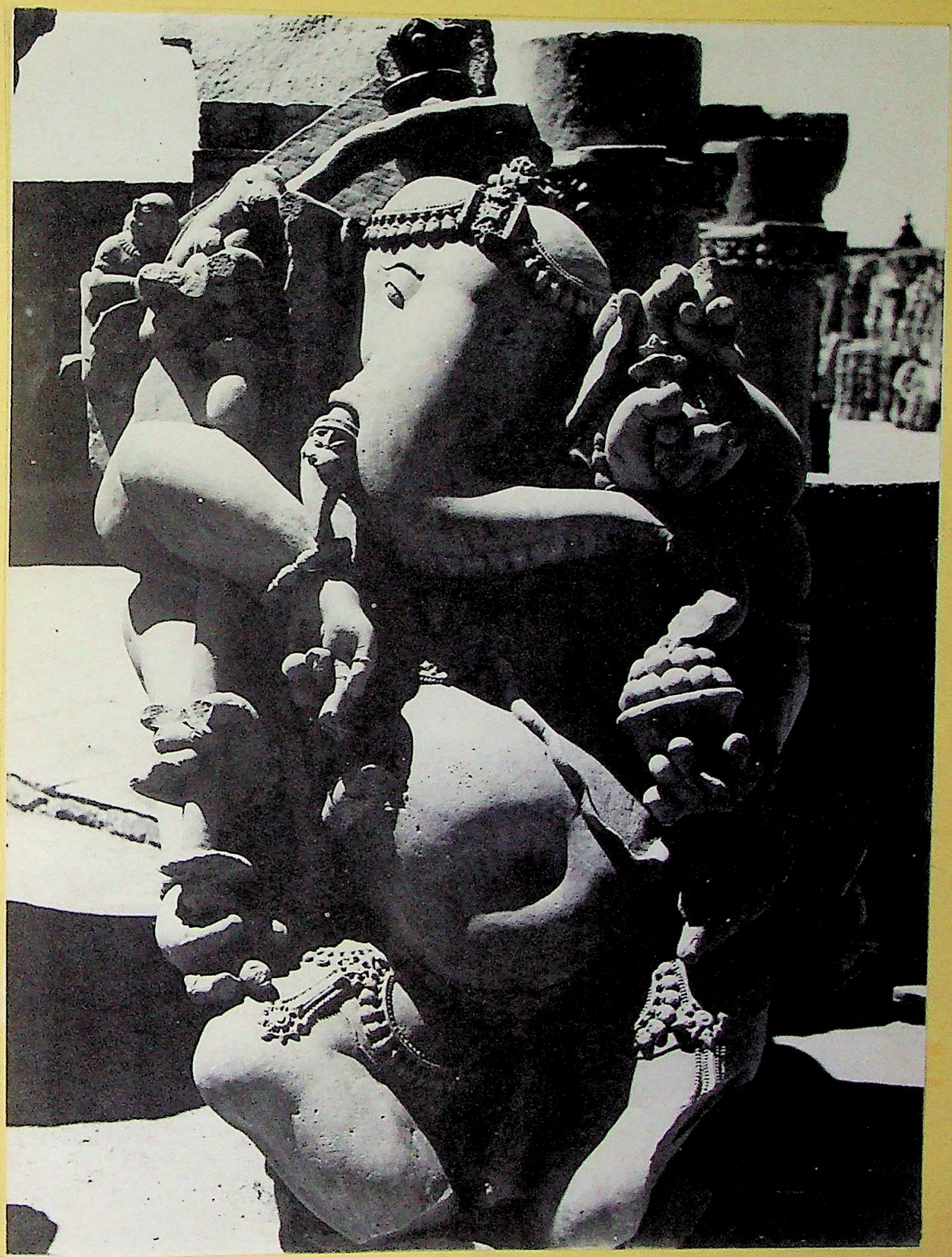

Ganesha from Khajuraho.

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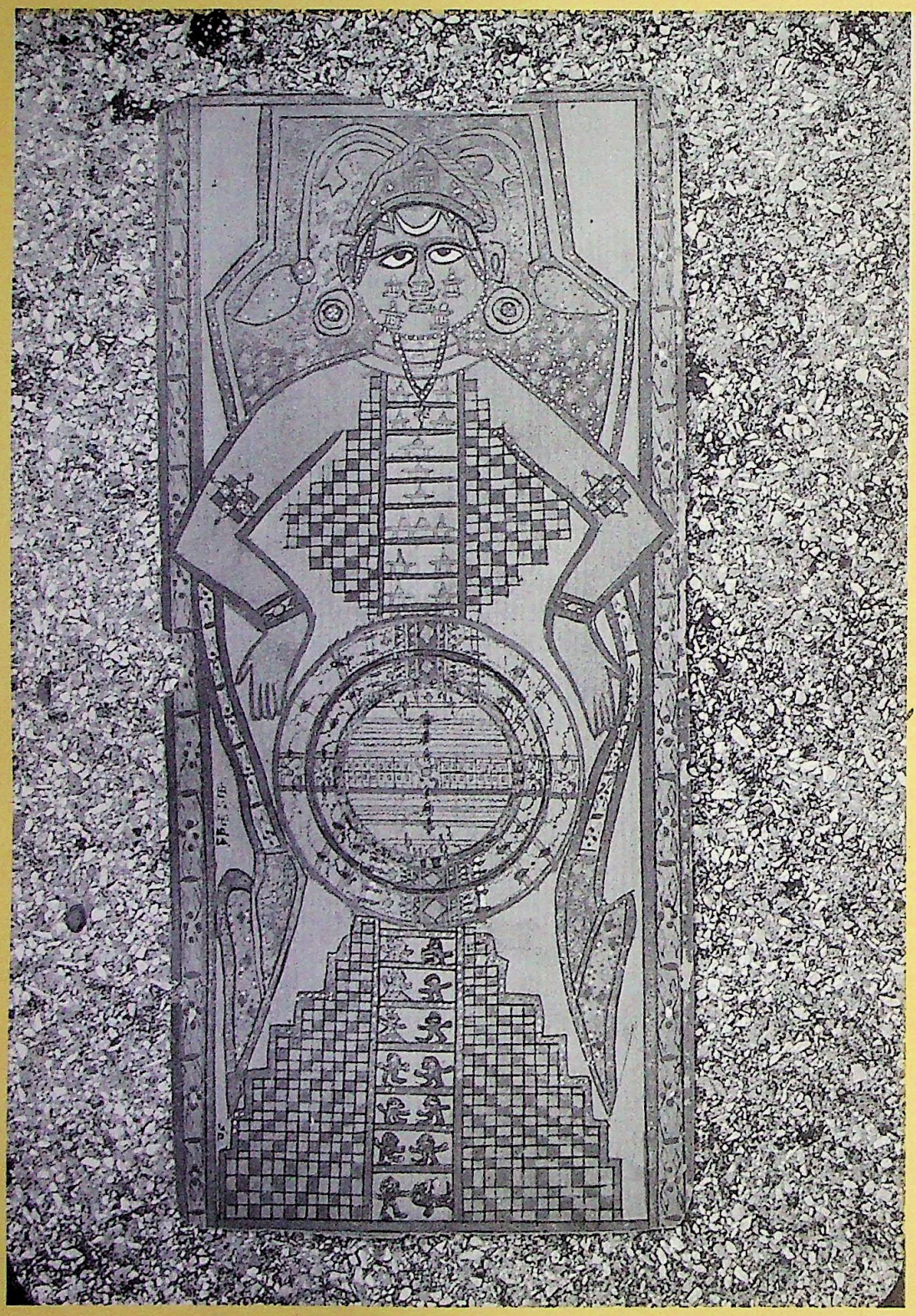

Tantric Figure.

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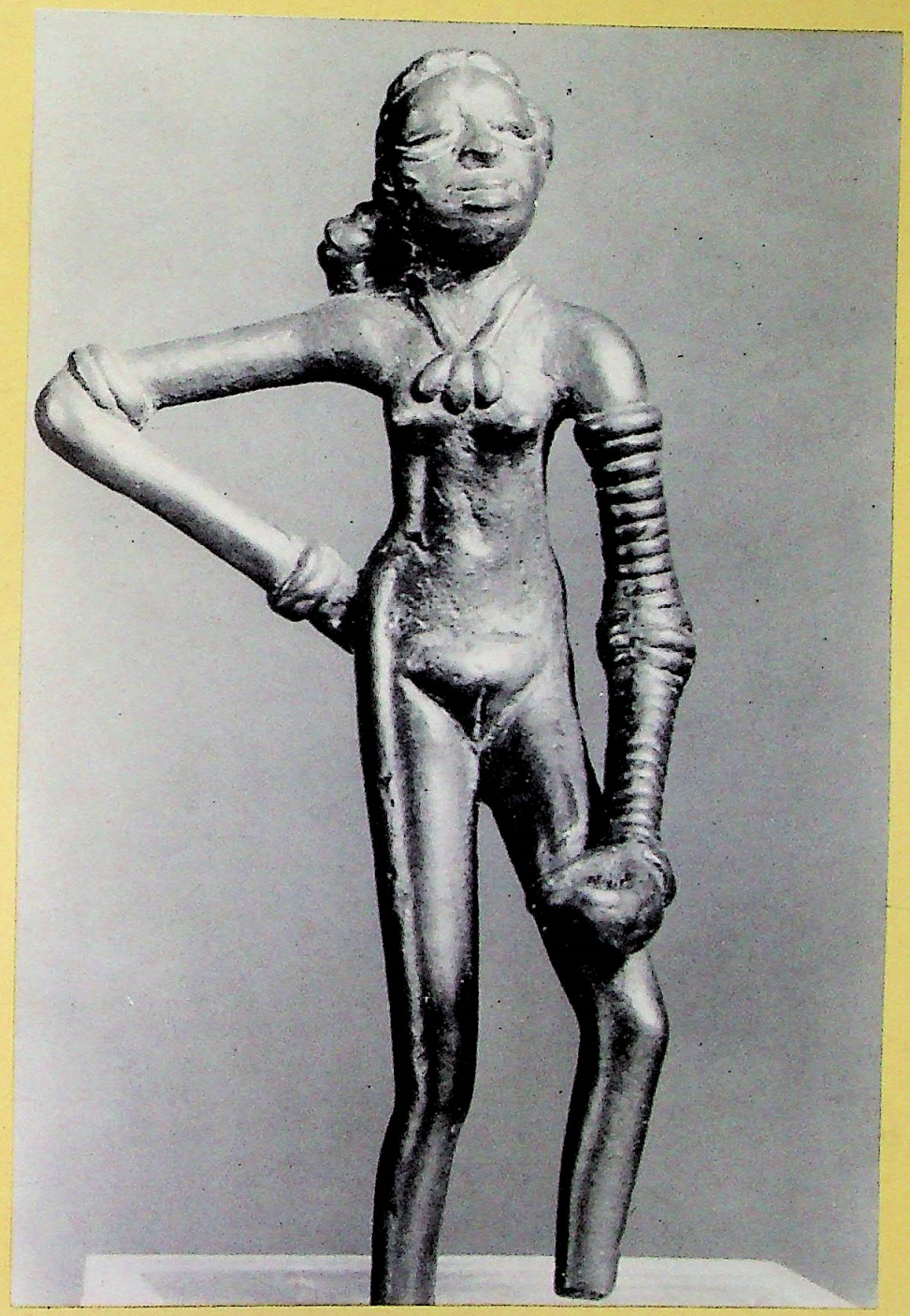

Dancer from Mohenjodaro.

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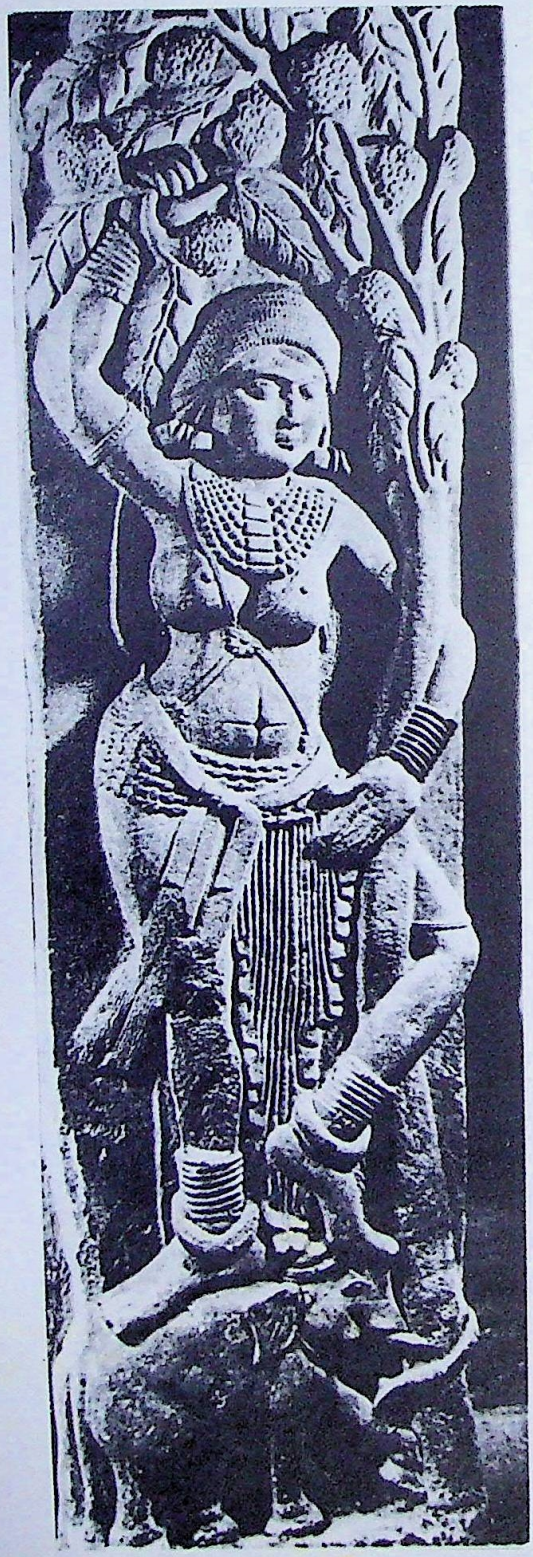
Parkham Statue - the Yaksha.



Barhut Yakshi.

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"Abiding alone in a secret place, without craving and without possession, he shall take his seat upon a firm seat, neither over-high nor over-low, and with the workings of the mind and of the senses held in check, with body, head, neck maintained in perfect equipoise, looking not round about him, so let him meditate, and thereby reach the peace of the abyss : and the likeness of one such, who knows the boundless joy that lies beyond the senses and is grasped by intuition, and who swerves not from truth, is that of a lamp in a windless place which flickers not."

The acceptance of this boundless sense of God, and the recognition of the lyrical limitations of men implied in the evolution of a devotional pantheon, naturally softened the puritanism of early Buddhist aesthetics into a delicate religious romanticism. The theory of beauty which is for ever associated with what we possess of the monuments of Buddhist art is, therefore, hardly to be distinguished from the idealistic art-philosophy of Hinduism.[1]

The depth that characterises the literature and art produced by the Hindus can also be sensed in the creations of the Buddhists, accepting as the Sanga (Buddhist order) devised. Like the evolutionary concept of Hindu metaphysic, the men evolves into godhood, the evolution of Gautama Buddha was seen as a parallel of the transformation of potential Buddhas from various states of Bodhisattvahood into the extended consciousness of the ultimate Buddha. The iconography of Bodhisattvas and of Taras (female divinities) grew apace and was transcreated in painting and sculptures.

[1] See Appendix I, "Philosophy of Ancient Asiatic Art," by Ananda Coomaraswamy ; also *The Nature of Buddhist Art* by the same author.

Plate: GOMITESVARA, Jain Sculpture ; about 980 A.D.

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SECTION THREE

JAINISM

JAINISM, the other most important system of religious ethics that arose in reaction to the logic of the Upanishads, takes its name from the title given to its founder, the *Jina* (the Victor), just as Buddhism takes its from *Buddha* the "Enlightened."

Vardhaman, the scion of Kshatriya princely family which ruled in some part of Magadha, the modern Bihar, was born in the year 599 B.C. According to Jacobi, the famous German orientalist, one of the great authorities on the history of this sect, "Vardhamana seems to have lived in the house of his parents till they died, and his elder brother Nandivardhana succeeded to what principality they had. Then at the age of twenty-eight he, with the consent of those in power, chose the spiritual career, which in India as the Church in Western countries seems to have offered a field for the ambition of younger sons. For twelve years he led a life of austerities, visiting even the wild tribes of the country called Radha. After the first year he went naked. From the end of these twelve years of preparatory self-mortification dates Vardhamana's *Kevalship* (adeptship). Thereafter he was recognised as Omniscient as a prophet of the Jainas or a *Tirthankara* (the founder of the path), and had the titles *Jina* (spiritual conqueror), *Mahavira* (great hero), etc., which were also given to Sakyamuni (Gautama Buddha). The last thirty years of his life he passed in teaching his religious system, and organising his order of ascetics, which . . . was patronised, or at least countenanced, chiefly by those princes with whom he was related through his mother."[1]

Just as Buddha recognised himself as one in a long line of Buddhas, so Jina considered himself to be in direct succession to twenty-three other Jinas or Tirthankaras. So that he was not really the originator of the system he inaugurated, but merely the last prophet who carried existing Jaina doctrines to their logical conclusions.

The Jains are divided into two main sub-sects, the *Digambaras* (clothed with the sky), who go about naked, and the *Svetambaras* (clothed in white), who wear white garments. Starting from the Dravidian doctrine of *Karma* and *Samsara*, as developed in the Upanishads, the Jainas fixed their goal in *Moksha* (release), which unlike the Buddhists they interpreted to be the delivery of the soul from birth and rebirth in the body in which it is clothed, and unlike the Hindus to be no absorption of the soul into the Deity, but its fusion with some metaphysical entity, of which the nature is indefinable. Four virtues are recognised as essential for the attainment of this goal—liberality, gentleness, piety, and remorse for failings—and these might be practised through the jewel-like means of right knowledge, right faith, and right walk (deed), and by the exercise of kindness to all objects, whether animate or inani-

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXII, Introduction, p. xv.

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mate. This last concept is much more stressed in Jainism than it is in Hinduism and Buddhism (of which religions, too, it formed a cardinal doctrine), probably because the Jains consider every object to be endowed with a soul.

In its earlier stages, the ideal of asceticism which Mahavira had emphasised came to be illustrated in art through the rather cold, rigid, and feelingless figure sculptures of Mahavira himself and the other Tirthankaras. Later developments of the Jaina doctrine, however, tended to relax the rigidity of the conventions imposed by Mahavira, and almost all the gods of the Hindu pantheon were included in the system as the object of *bhakti* (devotional worship). The sanctity of the Vedas was recognised and caste was generally conformed to.

It was in the spirit of this later absorption of Brahmanical devotionalism that the rich Jain laity, who, though not actively working for *Moksha*, were yet supposed to be walking on the path to it, built those magnificent monuments at Mount Abu and on the sacred hills of Palitana and Girnar, where the Jain clergy lived a monastic existence. Thus, though early Jaina aesthetic was puritanical in the face of popular hedonism in the same way as the aesthetic of primitive Buddhism, it, too, could not resist the influence of that fervent devotionalism and mystic worship of an ideal God through recourse to a humanised art which is the crowning glory of Hinduism.

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SECTION FOUR

THE EPICS

No period in the chequered history of India has been so rich in mental activity as the one thousand years or so which marked the Aryanisation of its vast distances. For not only during this period were the foundations laid of all subsequent Hindu culture in the revelation of the Veda, the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, but the epopees, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* were composed. With all the exalted grace and nobility of their imaginative descriptive poetry, the two epics tell the story of those vital conflicts of the early centuries of Indian civilisation—crystallise for us the essence of those remarkable forces, spiritual and physical, which stirred the soul of Aryan man during the process of his distillation into the farthest corners of India and his assimilation of Non-Aryan ideas into the amorphous collections of beliefs which has come to be known as Hindusim.

The Epics must have been sung in their ballad form between 1000 and 500 B.C. Their composition extended from the last date to about the fifth century A.D. In their earlier portions, three systems or cults of devotional theism around the three gods Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma appear. In the worship of the icons of these and other cult deities during a long period devotional art grew to maturity. From references to the images of Siva, Skanda, Vasudeva, etc., by Patanjali, it may be concluded that art had now come to be used as a vehicle for the expression of the fundamental truths of religion and philosophy.

We must not look to the Epics, however, for any defined system of religion or philosophy. They are mainly collections of the myths and legends of Hindustan of ancient times strung together on the thread of the purest of pure poetry. We may, however, glean from their pages some ideas of which the implications are important for our purpose.

The *Ramayana* is a poem of about 48,000 verses of a very high literary value. It is the work of a single author, Valmiki. It was probably written earlier than its sister epic the *Mahabharata.* The story of it is that Dasaratha, King of Kosala, with his capital at Ayodhya (modern Oudh), had four sons: Rama, by his chief wife Kaushalya; Bharata, by his favourite Kaikeyi; Lakshamana and Strughana, by Sumitra. Rama, the hero of the poem, wins the hand of Sita, daughter of King Janaka of Videha, by bending a huge bow, and is about to be declared heir-apparent on his return to Ayodhya when the intriguing women of the palace conspire against him. Kaikeyi, the mother of Bharata, in a mood of jealousy induces Dasaratha to exile Rama, and to appoint her own son successor to the throne. Forced to banish his eldest son, the king dies of grief. Bharata, being very devoted to his elder brother, refuses to take up the reins of government, and proceeds to the Chitrakuta forest, where

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Rama is in exile, and requests him to return. On Rama's stern refusal to break the terms of his promise to his father, Bharata returns to Ayodhya, and, placing his brother's sandals on the throne, rules as his Viceroy.

Meanwhile, during Rama's wandering in the Vindhyachal mountains a female daemon becomes infatuated with him, and on the rejection of her advances incites her brother Ravana, the demon King of Lanka (Ceylon), to decoy Sita. Ravana comes disguised as a hermit, and having ingeniously secured the absence of the princes, carries Sita away to Ceylon. Rama and Lakshamana search for her, and having received information of her whereabouts, march with a huge army led by the monkey general, Hanuman, against the enemy. After a prolonged battle Rama wins and, killing Ravana in single combat, triumphantly returns to take up the sovereignty of his father's kingdom.

Although, however, Sita's purity has been tested by the ordeal of fine, there still lurk in Rama's mind vague misgivings. One day on seeing a sketch of Ravana which Sita had drawn to give an impression of her evil abductor to her friends, he exiles her. She goes into the forests and lives at the hermitage of the poet Valmīki, the author of the *Ramayana* himself, and is here delivered of two sons, Lava and Kusa. The sage trains them in soldiery, and imparts to them the knowledge of the Veda and the *Ramayana*. One day they wander into Ayodhya, and are recognised by Rama, who reclaims them and their mother back.

Apart from certain references to architecture, painting, and sculpture, and an account of how the sage Valmiki employed the method of *Yoga* (meditation) in order to write the epic, there is not much of aesthetic import in the *Ramayana*. The references to actual works of art are hardly historical, and are besides of little concern here. The employment of *Yoga* as a method of contemplation, on the theme which the artist seeks to elaborate technically, may well be considered along with the theories on that subject suggested in the *Mahabharata*.

The *Mahabharata* is a long narrative of fact and fiction of about 100,000 stanzas. The authorship of the work is appropriately ascribed to Vyasa (the collector), who may be supposed to have edited the vast mass of folk tales and legends about "the fifth century B.C." The main event is the struggle between two historical Aryan clans, the Kurus and the Pandus, for supremacy, eventually decided by a bloody battle on the plains of Kurukshetra.

In Hastinapura, the ancient Delhi, two descendants of the King Bharata of the lunar race, Dhritarashtra and Pandu, claimed succession to the throne. The former being blind, the latter ascended the throne. Some time later, however, Pandu, being a leper, retired in favour of his elder brother, and betook himself to the forests. On his death, his five sons, Yudhisthira, Bhima, and Arjuna, by his wife Kunti, Nakula and Sahadeva, twins by Madri, came to Hastinapura, and were welcomed by their uncle, the old king, who made provisions for their education in the arts of war and peace. Dhritarashtra himself had a hundred sons, of whom the eldest was Duryodhana. Rivalry soon sprang up among the cousins, because the five sons of Pandu were superior in physical and mental skill, and had won the favour of their uncle. Duryodhana, who was the heir-apparent to the throne, induced his father to send them away

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to live out of Court for some time at a place where he had laid a plot to destroy them. Luckily, the Pandus escaped from the disaster which their cousin had designed for them, and lived in exile for some time. During their wanderings, Arjuna won the hand of Draupadi, daughter of King Draupada, in an open contest, and made her the common wife of himself and his brothers. While the *svayamvara* (the choice of a bridegroom) was going on they came across the god-prince Krishna of Dwarka, their cousin through their mother's sister, and made him their faithful friend and instructor.

Dhritarashtra, hearing of the Pandus' glorious success, recalled them to Hastinapura, and divided the kingdom into two equal portions between his own sons and them, so that the families might live in amity and friendship with each other. For some time peace did, indeed, prevail between the cousins. Then one day Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pandus, lost everything to Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kurus, at a game of dice, and it was agreed that he and his brothers should proceed again to exile for twelve years, after which they could come back and reclaim their heritage, if they spent an additional year in successful disguise.

The Pandus spent the prescribed twelve years in the jungles, adventuring into fresh fields and acquiring new knowledge, and then entered the employ of King Virata of Matsya in disguise. Everything went well, and they were about to return to the capital when an unexpected incident occurred. Kichaka, the brother of Matsya's queen, became enamoured of Draupadi, and was slain by Bhima. Duryodhana the Kuru, taking advantage of the temporary bitterness that had ensued in Matsya's kingdom following that incident, invaded the territories with a large army. The Pandus, still loyal to their employer, in spite of his brother's outrage, espoused his cause, and the long war began of which the final scene enacted in the plains of Kurukshetra ended in the routing of the imperial armies by the Pandu hosts, and the slaughter of the Kurus to a man. Dhritarashtra, having resigned the kingship, retired to the forests. Yudhisthira became king and ruled prosperously for some time, till he and his brothers, tired, too, of the world, resigned their high offices, and, leaving a descendant of their own and of the Kurus to rule in Hastinapura, set off to Mount Meru to enter the heaven of Indra, with Draupadi and a dog. On their way, however, all the others fell dead as being sinners or offenders against heavenly laws in some form or another except Yudhisthira, who, accompanied by his faithful dog, reached the gates of heaven. Here he was asked to abandon the dog if he wanted to enter heaven, but his sense of loyalty was shocked, and he refused to go in. The dog was in reality an incarnation of Justice and had sought to test Yudhisthira's constancy, so he was admitted. On entering heaven, however, he was told that Draupadi and his four brothers were suffering the tortures of hell, upon which he refused to stay in the celestial place without them. But even this turned out to be a test imposed by the gods, and he was joined by his brothers and Draupadi to live in perpetual bliss ever afterwards.

The story of the *Mahabharata* may be regarded as a alllegory of creation—a history of "man in his evolutionary development." "Looking at it from the symbolic point of view, the King Dhritarashtra is the human body which is acquired by the immortal monad (the Absolute) in order to go through the evolutionary journey;

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the mortal envelope is brought into existence by *Tanha*, or thirst for life (desire). He is blind because the body without the mind is merely senseless matter, and thus is incapacitated for governing, and some other person is represented in the *Mahabharata* as being the governor of the state, the nominal king being the body, Dhritarashtra. As the theosophical scheme holds that there is a double line of evolution within us, we find that the Kurus spoken of in the poem represent the more material side of those two lines, and the Pandava princes, of whom Arjuna is one, stand for the spiritual side of the stream, that is Arjuna represents the immortal side.

"The long wanderings and the varied hardships of the Pandus are wanderings caused by the necessities of evolution before their better parts are able to make a stand for the purpose of gaining control in man's evolutionary struggle. This also has reference to the cyclic rise and fall of nations and the race.

"The hostile armies, then, who meet on the plains of the Kurus. are these two collections of the human faculties and powers, those on the one side tending to drag us down, those on the other aspiring towards spiritual illumination. The battle refers not only to the great warfare that mankind as a whole carries on, but also to the struggle which is inevitable as soon as any individual in the human family allows his higher nature to govern him in his life."[1]

The essence of the spirit that pervades the universe is concretised in the *Mahabharata*, sometimes in the person of the god Krishna, at others in Krishna as the *logos*, or the Divine Word, the Universal Soul.[2] The theism and the pantheism implied in these alternate treatments are best brought out in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The ingenious anonymous author of this little treatise seized upon the opening of the battle between the Kurus and the Pandus, and showing Arjuna, the Pandu prince, overcome with remorse at the idea of warring with his cousins, developed a dialogue between him and the god Krishna, his charioteer, on the true nature of action and thought in relation to the Divine Life.

Krishna, as the Universal Soul, gives a definition of his nature, which is really an echo of the Upanishadic definition of the Absolute developed from the hymn of creation, and reconciled with the idea of God as incarnated in the world: "I am the origin of all,"[3] "I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself and remain separate."[4] Further, he declares that he is the essence of both the *brahman* and the *atman*. "I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things." The realisation of his nature is, he says, very difficult: "Exceeding great is the toil of those whose mind is attached to the Unshown; for the Unshown way is painfully won by those that wear the body." So he makes a concession to the mortal nature of men. "But as for them, who, having cast all works on Me and given themselves over to me, worship

[1] W. Q. Judge, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Introduction.

[2] Here, then, the bridge between the Upanishadic God and the God of the Bible is made. The historical Jesus may be considered as a counterpart of the incarnate Krishna.

[3] "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1).

"The God that made the world and all things therein . . . made of one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they might seek God, if haply they might seek after Him and find Him" (Acts xvii. 24, 26, 27).

[4] "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is" (Luke x. 22).

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Me in meditation, with whole-hearted *Yoga*, these speedily I lift up from the sea of death and life, O Partha, their minds being set on Me."[1]

Hence the personal idea of the god Krishna finds a place quite consistently with the theosophic idea. In this respect, however, as in regard to the impersonal ideal, it must be mentioned that the author of the *Gita* only developed existing ideas to their logical conclusions. For Krishna, as a theistic god, traces his history to the *Rig-Veda*. There, it might be recalled, was mentioned a deity, Vishnu, embodying the power of the Sun. During the transition to the Upanishads this Vishnu had become one of the most important gods of popular fancy as signifying the conception of the Blessed Cosmic Spirit and sacrificing itself for the world. He was sometimes worshipped as *Purusha*, the sacrificed giant, the source of all life, or *Purushottama* (the male Supreme). Later he became the god Hari, or Narayana, the omnipotent principle or essence of life, the Supreme Self as the individual Self, and the idea of *bhakti* (devotion) as the ecstatic worship of the Divine Being, through ritual and meditation, became attached to him. Among the various incarnations of Vishnu that were evolved by minor cults, Krishna, an aboriginal cowherd god, was at one time declared as the most important by the Aryans, now anxiously ennobling each new member of their enlarged pantheon in turn. In the earliest portion of the *Mahabharata*, Krishna is simply a demi-god, but towards the end he has risen to be the Supreme, and has almost become the hero of the poem in the person of Yadva, Prince Vasudeva of Dwarka, cousin, adviser, and friend of the Pandus, and several elaborate cults such as the Vishnuite Bhagvatas and the Panchratras have grown up around him.

As the Supreme God, Krishna dictates the doctrine that each man has a *dharma* (duty), and he must as a member of the four castes observe the principles of social and religious *karma* (obligations) prescribed for him. The true end of man is "to save his soul" by attaining *Yoga*, the union of his conditioned self with the Unconditioned. The way to this union lies through knowledge of the distinction between the self and the not-self, *Ishwara* and *Maya* (soul and matter), and through the exercise of *bhakti* (devotional worship).

The significance of the basic ideas of the *Mahabharata* and its masterly appendix, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, for aesthetics can never be too greatly exaggerated. Culled from the vast literature of the ages which had gone before them, they contained the essence of all that was most valuable of the philosophy of good and evil in that literature, in a form which, though allegorical, was refined enough to be available for immediate use, and to be the basis for the systematising edifications of the generations that were to follow. It was the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* which, by their express recognition of the philosophical Absolute as taking the form of Vasudeva Krishna, for the first time authorised and rendered universal the worship of a theistic ideal which had by the necessity of human finitude been unofficially in force for nearly two thousand years. It was here, too, that the view was plainly set out which had been so far implicitly understood, that the Ultimate ideal which is impersonal from the point of view of philosophy, and personal from the point of view of religion, is

[1] "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28).

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expressional from the point of view of art. "I am the splendour of splendid things," said Sri-Krishna, the personification of the Upanishadic *Atman-Brahman-Ananda*, and the Ishvara of devotional theism. And just as all the qualities of our experience are traceable to the very same ideal, so, too, beauty, for he says: "Whatsoever is beautiful . . . understand thou that to go forth from a fragment of my splendour."

Alongside of this definition of the ideal of aesthetics must be emphasised the two methods enjoined for its realisation, which originated in Vedic times and were resuscitated in the Epics and the *Bhagavad-Gita*—*bhakti* and *Yoga*.

The doctrine of *bhakti* is implied in the very fact of the position of a personal god in the *Mahabharata*, for the idea of a beloved in whom we rest our faith, and in whose charity we fix our hopes, involves that of a devoted lover and believer. It must not, however, be understood as the devotion to God exercised with a view to gaining earthly ends. The *Bhagavad-Gita* insists that the feeling of deep love for God ought always to be performed as a *dharma*—disinterested, dispassionate—action. It is only a method to reach the Infinite Bosom of the Unshown, for "the Unshown way is painfully won by those that wear the body." "All those who turn to Me, be they even women, traders, serfs, or doers of evil, and much more so Brahmans and anchorites," "these speedily I lift up from the sea of life and death, their minds being set on Me."

There are two modes of *Yoga*, as it should be employed in the service of Vasudeva Krishna, says the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The first is exercised through *sannyasa*, the casting off or renunciation of all religious and social ties, in order to engage in solitary meditation on the distinction between the self and the Not-self, soul and matter. This is of necessity a very difficult task and performable only by the most devoted adepts. The second method, which is much easier to follow, involves (1) *Kriya-Yoga*, by which the devotee discharges all the religious and social duties of life without any expectation of reward for his labours other than that he should become a *yogin*, "a man of established intelligence," and thus be able to practise *Samadhi*, or (2) the loving contemplation of himself in union with the Supreme, whereby he is to rise "beyond the moods" to the "Brahmic state of Bliss."

According as the second of these two paths is easier and within the reach of every man and woman, it is recommended to the man of the world, and although theoretically and even practically it has been subordinated to the path of knowledge by renunciation, the vast majority of Hindus through their thousand years of history have practised it, and left the first to the few who having lived lives of the highest *karma* (deeds) are ready to make the final leap into the ocean of release.

Although the precise details of the history of the ideas of the Epic age are not available, it may be conjectured that they dominated not only the theoretical side of life, but also largely entered into practice, for side by side with the scheme of life, of which they were a part, there was all the time a vigorous religious practice going on in Buddhist monasteries and Brahmanical temples. The crystallisation of theoretical idealism and practical theism had inspired, and all the arts were proceeded with great enthusiasm. The practising artists were dominated by the twin conception of *bhakti* and *Yoga*, and employed them as aids in the execution of their work in the

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same way as they were used by ordinary worshippers. The view that their work was dedicated to the ideal of their professed religion infused the artists with a sense of passionate devotion to their theme, and the method of *Yoga* was employed to concentrate attention on the elusive abstract conceptions of the Supreme Deity in order to translate His various qualities into concrete forms.

That *Yoga*, for instance, was employed in the service of art, and how it was employed, is obvious from an account we have left to us of the sage Valmiki's method in writing the epic *Ramayana*. "Seating himself with his face towards the East, and sipping water according to the rule, he set himself to *Yoga* (contemplation) of his theme. By virtue of his *Yoga* power he saw clearly before him Rama, Lakshamana, and Sita, and Dasaratha, together with his wives, in his kingdom, laughing, talking, acting, and moving as in real life . . . by *Yoga* power that righteous one beheld all that was to come to pass in the future, like a *nelli* fruit (*phyllanthus emblica*, denoting clear insight) on the palm of his hand. And having truly seen by virtue of his concentration, the generous sage began the setting forth of the history of Rama."[1] The *Ramayana* gives, indeed, various other uses to which *Yoga* was put in the Epic period. For instance, Hanuman, the monkey general who helped Rama to search for Sita, is said to have "prayed to the Gods and ranged the forests in imagination till he found her."[2]

From all this it is obvious that, in theory as well as in practice, art was considered as a polarisation through means of which we touch the innermost depths of our nature, so that we may lift ourselves to a state of calm and lucid exaltation and be face to face with Reality. The Upanishadic view that God is immanent in the universe, that we are perpetually in the presence of God and yet removed from Him by the thick veil of the senses, was acknowledged, and it was urged that the practice of loving contemplation would gradually disclose to us the inner life of things. A doctrine such as this, which insists on the vitalising power of religious devotion as a discipline for artists, certainly points to an idealistic aesthetics as characteristic of this period, and yet we find that the law-givers Manu and Chanakya, developing the Vedic idea of caste, still persisted in adhering to a puritanical objection to art : the first by prohibiting the "householder to dance, or sing, or play on musical instruments," and by reckoning "architects, actors, and singers amongst the unworthy men who should not be invited to the ceremony of offerings to the dead" ; the second by classing musicians and actors with courtesans. But this cleavage of opinion is hardly important, since in the course of the centuries during which the Epics were sung as ballads and finally composed, many views flourished which were, however, all feeble rivals of the main current of devotionalism that had written itself largely and indelibly on Epic literature and stamped itself predominantly and ineradicably on the arts of the Epic period, and after.[3]

[1] Balakandam, *Ramayana*. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] Besides the aesthetic implications of the religio-philosophical conceptions of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, note that the two stories have frequently been illustrated in Indian art, specially in Java and Bali, and afforded endless themes for the drama and the dance.

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SECTION FIVE

PURANAS

IMMEDIATELY following the Epics, about the first century A.D., the Puranas, mythological and speculative histories of the universe, began to be written. They were intended to promote several particular Brahmanical beliefs, which had been steadily developing since the Vedic times. These books all recognised the main Hindu doctrine of Trimurti, or the triple manifestation of the Supreme Deity in His creative, preservative, and destructive aspects, the source of which lies in the hymn of creation. There we have seen that the Absolute was suggested as having manifested Itself, by splitting Itself, as it were, into two eternal substances, soul and matter. The equilibrium of soul and matter, the Hindus believe, is determined by three ultimate *gunas* or qualities : *Sattvas*, or truth which is creative, *Rajas*, or passion which maintains, and *Tamas*, or gloom which destroys this equilibrium. In the process of the deification of the abstract philosophical conceptions, it was designed to symbolise these three aspects of the Universe or God. As Creator, the Supreme Being was called Brahma, as preserver, Vishnu, and as destroyer, Siva. I shall come to the detailed symbolism evolved out of this conception of Trimurti by the different sects of Hinduism later. It is sufficient here to say that while the conception of Brahma, as Ishvara, is behind all Puranic Hinduism, Vishnu became the divine hero of the Vaishnavite sect, and Siva was adopted by the Savas, and further incarnations of all of them were gradually evolved. All the various gods came to be represented in art, all together in Trimurti figures and singly in their various incarnations. And since they symbolised the three eternal *gunas* or qualities of the universe, all images were classified to conform to one or the other of these chief types.

The many discussions of the creation of the universe, its destruction and regeneration, of the genealogy of the gods and the reigns of the Manus (law givers), and the histories of the kings of the solar and the lunar race which occur in the Puranas, show that their preponderating preoccupation is to supply an encyclopaedia of ancient Hindu philosophy and religion. There are, however, also many references to art, two of which, occurring in the *Bhagvata* and the *Agni Purana*, may here be noted.

Reviving the favourite simile of the Upanishads, the former compares the practice of *Yoga* (contemplation) by artists to the craft of the arrow maker : "I have learned concentration from the maker of arrows."

The latter, also borrowing its view from the Upanishads, recognises the connection of *Yoga* with dream life, and deduces a rule for the completion of a work of art in the mind during a deliberately evoked dream before setting it down in material form.

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The artisan is enjoined, for instance, to perform purificatory ablutions on the night before starting his work and to pray :

> O thou Lord of all gods, teach me in dreams how to carry out all the work I have in mind.

Plate: TRIMURTI; c. 750-755 A.D.

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SECTION SIX

CLASSICAL SANSKRIT LITERATURE

THERE is a theory, originally suggested by Max Müller, that in the wake of the Epics and the Puranas there began, in the fifth century A.D., a renaissance of Indian art and literature at the court of King Vikramaditya of Ujjain. Certain details of this view have been rejected by the late Professor Macdonnel on the authority of the epigraphical researches of Mr. Fleet and Professor Bühler, but the main fact that the fifth century A.D. marked the beginning of a cultural revival is so obvious from the quality of the artistic and literary work executed during this time as to seem absolutely irrefutable. In fact, it was the century which saw the "culmination," as Dr. Coomaraswamy calls it, "of the two phases of Indian history, the Vedic and the Epic, and the efflorescence of another"—a "Golden Age." The Gupta dynasty had inaugurated in A.D. 400 a political, social, and spiritual unity in India, a unity that was destined not only to bind India into a comprehensive whole for a thousand years or so, but to breathe the breath of oneness into the diverse parts of Asia. When I speak of the inauguration of a cultural unity by the Guptas, I do not mean that they fused the heterogeneous elements of Indian culture into an all-absorbing scheme of life. No such thing has ever happened in India, nor can it ever be supposed to happen in so vast a sub-continent. What I mean to say is that the Guptas sowed the seed of goodwill and tolerance among the various powers—political, social, religious, and intellectual—which held sway over the country. They were patrons of art and literature, and it was during their time, or in times immediately subsequent to theirs, that those monuments were achieved which will remain the chief glory of India until the contemporary renaissance is perfected. Not only was this the age which stimulated the production of a great deal of original art and literature, but the arts and sciences of the preceding ages were codified during this time, and original theories of criticism of poetry, drama, dance, music, painting, and sculpture were evolved in a vast literature of technical laws such as the *Bharata-natya-Shastra* and other *Silpa-shastras*. I have shown how the Epics grouped together the ideas of the previous ages. In the Classical renaissance these ideas perfectly assimilated. The philosophical idealism of the Upanishads had now been thoroughly reconciled to Brahmanical systems of devotional belief. *Hinayana* Buddhism was becoming *Mahayana* Buddhism, and the asceticism of the Jainas had weakened. The sensibility of man had emerged from the trial of ages of intellectualism to indulge openly and officially in an indulgent humanism. The belief in a kind God who takes the forms imagined by His worshippers, the recognition of the brotherhood of man evoked by a tolerant undestanding of life, the exercise of love of nature and kindness to every being on earth—these and other traits are reflected in the frescoes at Ajanta, in the works of poets and dramatists, and

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in all the arts of this time.

As would seem obvious, a humanist culture evolved a humanist theory of criticism. Kalidasa, the greatest dramatist of the Golden Age, among other references to the arts scattered about in his works, has a scene in *Sakuntala* from which we may gather such a criterion.[1]

Dushanta, the princely hero of the play, fails to recognise his beloved Sakuntala, and sends her away from the palace where she has sought him after long years of separation. When she has gone he discovers his mistake and pines for her. In order to console himself he has painted a picture of Sakuntala :

(*Enter a maid with a tablet*)

MAID.

Your majesty, here is the picture of your lady. (*She produces the tablet.*)

KING (*gazing at it*).

It is a beautiful picture. See !
A graceful arch of brows above great eyes ;
Lips bathed in darting, smiling light that flies
Reflecting from white teeth ; a mouth as red
As red karkandu-fruit ; love's brightness shed
Over all her face in burst of liquid charm—
The picture speaks, with living beauty warm.

CLOWN (*looking at it*).

The sketch is full of sweet meaning. My eyes seem to stumble over its uneven surface. What more can I say ? I expect to see it come to life, and I feel like speaking to it.

MISHRAKESHI.

The King is a clever painter. I seem to see the dear girl before me.

KING.

My friend,
What in the picture is not fair,
Is badly done ;
Yet something of her beauty there,
I feel, is won.

(*Sighing*). I treated her with scorn and loathing ever ;
Now o'er her pictured charms my heart would burst.

CLOWN.

There are three figures in the picture, and they are all beautiful. Which one is the lady Sakuntala ?

KING.

Which do you think ?

[1] For other references to the arts in Classical literature, see "Portrait Painting as a Device in Sanskrit Plays," *J. A. O. S.*, Vol. 39.

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CLOWN (*observing closely*).

I think it is this one leaning against the creeper which she has just sprinkled. Her face is hot and the flowers are dropping from her hair ; for the ribbon is loosened. Her arms droop like weary branches; she has loosened her girdle, and she seems a little fatigued. This, I think, is the lady Sakuntala ; the others are her friends.

KING.

You are good at guessing. Besides, here are proofs of my love.

See where discolorations faint
Of loving handling tell ;
And here the swelling of the paint
Shows where my sad tears fell.

Chatoorika, I have not finished the background. Go, get the brushes.

CLOWN.

What are you going to add ?

MISHRAKESHI.

Surely, every spot that the dear girl loved.

KING.

Listen, my friend.

The stream of Malini, and on its sands
The swan pair resting ; holy foothill lands
Of great Himalayas' sacred ranges, where
The yaks are seen ; and under the trees that bear
Bark hermit-dresses on their branches high.
A doe that on the buck's horn rubs her eye.

. . . .

And another ornament that Sakuntala loved I have forgotten to paint.

. . . .

The siris blossom, fastened o'er her ear,
Whose stamens brush her cheek ;
The lotus chain like autumn moonlight soft
Upon her bosom meek.

CLOWN.

But why does she cover her face with fingers lovely as the pink water lily ? She seems frightened. (*He looks more closely*). I see. Here is a bold bad bee. He steals honey, and so he flies at her lotus-face.

KING.

Sting that dear lip, O bee, with cruel power,
And ye shall be imprisoned in a flower.

CLOWN.

Well, he doesn't seem afraid of your dreadful punishment . . . .

KING.

Will he not go, though I warn him ?

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CLOWN (*aloud*).
It is only a picture, man.[1]

It is evident from this and other references to art in Classical Sanskrit literature that besides the works produced to supply the demands of the temple, art had now also come to be considered as an accomplishment which might be acquired by private individuals. The reason was, as I have said before, that philosophy had now been reconciled to life and the popular view had been evolved that by recreating the universe through art and literature man was only doing what god had done in creating Universe—indulged in the sport of creation. "The specifically religious element is no longer insistent, no longer anti-social; it is manifested in life, and in an art that reveals life not in a mode of opposition to spirituality, but as an intricate ritual fitted to the consummation of perfect experience."[2]

The treatment of life by the artist must, however, in no sense be construed as realistic in the Western sense of that word, because the method employed by Indian artists has always been one of deliberate visualisation through memory and the imagination —the evolution of the conception before execution. Nowhere in Classical literature is there a reference to the artist drawing or painting from life, or carving figures in imitation of living models, and those very elements which seem in the Classical frescoes of Ajanta and in Gupta sculpture to be taken from life testify only to the keenness of the Hindu artist's memory. "They are simply the most vital and the most felt part of Indian art, where the artist is most completely and literally identified with his subject."[3] There is here no consideration paid to anatomical detail. The artist knows life, no doubt, but he draws back and looks at it from afar as a beautiful and coloured whole, miscellaneous experience to be knit together in epic harmony. Another fact which proves the essentially imaginary and idealistic trend of this art is that alongside those very themes which appear naturalistic in it are mythological and legendary subjects, evidently seen through the burning imagination of religious enthusiasts. The fire of *bhakti* and *Yoga*, over which Hindu artists have burnt themselves in sacrifice from the earliest times till the decay of tradition in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was at its intensest in the Classical Age. The devotional cults of Vaishnavism, Saivaism, and Saktism were, as I have said, at their ripest and purest among the dominant sectors of the society. And if the patrons of art and literature, the Gupta kings, were, as the chroniclers tell us, fervent Vaishnava Bhagvatas, they patronised the Buddhist monks and also the laity. The art which flourished in their reigns, even though sometimes narrative and descriptive, was inspired by a profound religious instinct. It is an art which is charged with an ever present sense of light in the heart of humanity, an art which above all others evokes in us a state of ethereal, buoyant tenseness, at once the exaltation and the annihilation of self, catharsis or release.

[1] *Sakuntala*, translated by A. W. Ryder, Act IV, pp. 73-74.
[2] Coomaraswamy. [3] *Ibid.*

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SECTION SEVEN

PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS

THE "Golden Age," which saw the rise of Classical Sanskrit literature out of the Veda and the Epics, also witnessed the evolution of the *Darshanas* (demonstrations), or systems of philosophy. As these reinterpretations and codifications of Upanishadic teaching have supplied the deeper foundations of Indian culture until to-day, their bearing on aesthetics, though not immediate and direct, is important. There are six of these systems :

(1) *Purva Mimansa.*
(2) *Uttara Mimansa* (*Vedanta*).
(3) *Samkhya.*
(4) *Yoga.*
(5) *Nyaya.*
(6) *Vaiseshika.*

I will not go into the details of all these systems here. I will point out only the salient features, which are purely theoretical, while I shall go into some detail in dealing with those which have deeply entered the living thoughts of the people.

The *Purva Mimansa* is a critical exposition of the Veda, which it regards as eternal. It was originally designed to be an inquiry into the ritual of the Vedic texts, but became an epistemological discussion of the true and proper method of instituting such inquiries. As an examination of the nature of knowledge, it paved the way for the ontological theory of the *Uttara Mimansa*, and on that fact alone rests its claim to be regarded as a speculative system.

The *Uttara Mimansa*, or *Vedanta*, system reinterprets the Upanishadic theory which explains the universe as having emanated from the one super-spiritual principle, *Ananda*. As embodied in the commentaries of Sri Sankaracharya, who lived in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., and of Ramanuja, who taught in the twelfth century, the Vedanta permeated the very marrow of Hindu society, and has exercised an influence in India comparable only to that of Christianity in Europe.

To the Upanishadic philosophers the *Atman-Brahman-Ananda* was an all-pervading Reality entering all the known and the unknown universes, and essentially one with them, though veiled from them by their varied forms, the manyness and the duality of their unessential phenomena. Sankaracharya declared that the formal, dualistic world is *Maya*, utterly illusive and unreal, having only a practical and conventional value. This doctrine of the unreality of the world raised the difficult question as to what purpose the Supreme Being had in creating this fictitious universe. Sankara-

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charya explained the difficulty by the declaration that the Lord created the world to entertain Himself by indulging in the sport (*lila*) of creation. But, although he thus cut this world off from the other world, the sage allowed himself and his followers the grace of religion, through the practice of which, he held, a gradual emancipation from the bonds of existence might be achieved. And inspite of the fact that he was a profound intellect himself and could perhaps dispense with formal methods of communication with God, he recognised the need of images for worship, visited shrines, and sang devotional hymns, and in the end sought to be forgiven for these inconsistencies against the purity of his professed monism by praying : "O Lord, pardon my three sins : I have in contemplation clothed in form Thyself that has no form ; I have in praise described Thee who dost transcend all qualities ; and in visiting shrines I have ignored Thine Omnipresence."

The apparent contradictions of Sankaracharya's belief in the complete separation of Reality (God) from appearance (universe) and his practice of a devotional theism, implying a belief in the phenomenal world, were reconciled by Ramanuja, who set forth the doctrine that the *Brahman*, the Reality or God (whom he identified with Vishnu), though not essentially one with individual souls, is yet related to them because after salvation they become part of Him. The Supreme Soul is thus not an abstract thing, but a soul possessing all good qualities, which occasionally appears enshrined in matter. By declaring that the Deity manifests Himself in various incarnations for the benefit of His worshippers, and that by faith in Him and by the practice of love and devotion to Him men can attain His qualities, and thus rise from the low plane of material existence to the joy of the Infinite, Ramanuja gave a strong foundation to the devotional creed of Vaishnavism.

The *Samkhya* system supplies the basis for the *Yoga*, and may thus be considered as subsidiary to it.

We have seen how the Upanishads emphasised the difficulties inherent in the task of self-realisation, the attainment of God. The instruments of knowledge, it was there maintained, are vitiated by relativity, and must be purged of all impurity if they are to enable us to apprehend reality. In the Epic period the doctrine of *Yoga* was developed further, particularly in connection with the ends of religion. In the aphorisms of Patanjali, however, it was elaborated into a definite system, and in that form it has been the theoretical backbone of the practice of *Yoga* ever since.

The *Samkhya* philosophy postulated a pluralism of two beginningless and endless substances, *purusha* (soul) and *prakriti* (matter), as against the pure monism of the Vedanta. *Prakriti* (matter) is regarded as the first cause, the Unconditioned source of all existence, and *purusha* the Unconditioned soul, is the idle spectator of the eternal unfolding and manifestation of the *prakriti*, the material principle, being distinct from it really, and only apparently, unconsciously, allied to it.

Prakriti or universal matter, has three *gunas* (qualities), which do not constitute its essence (that being indeterminate and one), but merely express three phases of it in terms of ordinary experience. The three *gunas* are *Sattvas* (goodness or truth) ; *Rajas* (fieriness or passion) ; and *Tamas* (gloom), so called on account of the feeling which matter evokes at different times. They characterise all things, and the pro-

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portion in which the one or the other of them predominates in a thing makes the nature of that thing real, fiery, or gloomy.

Resting on the familiar conception that the universe is one long process of creation, preservation, and destruction, the *Samkhya* suggests that when the universe has been temporarily dissolved into its primaeval stuff the three *gunas* or qualities of the universe, are in perfect equilibrium. In this state matter remains inert for a time, and the soul relatively bound to it rests too. But then matter moves, for the souls have to endure the results of their former *karma* (deeds), or if they are almost perfect have yet to attain the final liberation. So the Universe renews itself, the equilibrium of the *gunas* is lost, and the souls are clothed in material forms.

The actual process of creation is some such as this : *Prakriti*, or universal matter, gives birth to *buddhi*, Pure Compassionate Reason. The *guna* or quality of *sattva* predominates in it. *Buddhi* gives rise to *Ahamkara* the principle of the I, which in the Cartesian dictum of "I think, therefore I am," is imagined to be real, "the subject of its own cognition." From *Ahamkara* springs up *manas*, the mind, or the intellect, and the ten *indriyas*, or sense-organs, five of which, sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, are the "organs of the understanding" the other five, speech, grasp, gait, evacuation, and procreation, the "organs of action." The reception by these organs of the elements of the external world, earth, water, fire, air, and ether, not in their real subtle forms, but in their empirical gross forms, by the respective sense-organs, nose, tongue, eye, skin, ear, creates experience.

As soon as the *buddhi* realises the distinction of matter and soul, through the preponderance of the quality of truth in it, it has escaped into the beginningless and endless Soul, and is freed for ever from earthly existence.

Patanjali, who defined *Yoga* as the "repression of the (lower) activities of the understanding," took his stand by the *Samkhya* hypothesis, that the soul has become lost in the seemingly real world which the *buddhi* and its complementary functions create out of their experience. So he enjoins an introspective analysis of the *buddhi*, in order that it may realise *svarupa* its "essential form," the Unconditioned, and may thus be freed from the slavery to experience, and be exalted into *Kaivalya* (solitude of the soul).

There are two kinds of *Yoga*, namely, (1) *Kriya-Yoga* (practical), (2) *Raja-Yoga* (superior). The former is a necessary preliminary for the exercise of the latter, and entails the following rules : (1) strict adherence to the law against slaughter, falsehood, theft, unchastity, and mammon-worship ; (2) the exercise of the outer and the inner check to secure the purity of the soul, and the performance of ascetic exercises, the repeating of prayers, or of the mystic symbol *Aum*, and devotion to God ; (3) the determination of postures suitable to meditation ; (4) the regulation of breath, in which the habit of long breath, inspiration, and the retention of breath is acquired ; (5) the withdrawal of the senses from external things to the *buddhi*, and the realisation of its intimate relation as soul.

When the exercise of these practices has led to the purification of the intellect and the Pure Reason, the rules of *Raja-Yoga* may be practised in order to merge the intellect and the Pure Reason, which makes the soul spiritual. These are as follows :

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(1) concentration, the confinement of the *buddhi* to some part of the body or to an external object, attention being fixed on a particular point to drill the understanding into a perfect certainty of aim and steadfastness;[1] (2) contemplation, or the formation of imaginary conceptions in a state of concentration;[2] (3) the union or consent is then achieved by the fading away of the concentrated *buddhi* into ecstasy, to become the unfettered soul, realising the solitude of *Kaivalya*, the full realisation of Self and God.[3]

The only value of the two last systems, the *Nyaya* and the *Vaiseshika*, is that they both elaborate a reasoned logic to prove the validity of the intuitive method of God realisation, and thus strengthen the *apriori* assumption of a Supreme Being by the *Vedanta*, the *Samkhya*, and the *Yoga* philosophies, as the end of all human endeavour.

[1] "Cease, but from thy own activity, steadfastly fixing thine eyes upon one point" (see Maritain, *Prayer and Intelligence*).

[2] "In my opinion," says St. Teresa, "we should grow in virtue by contemplating the Divine Perfections. . . . The best method of acquiring self-knowledge is to apply ourselves to the knowledge of God."

"Without contemplation we shall never completely abandon our weaknesses and imperfections. We shall always remain attached to the earth, and we shall never rise much above the sentiments of human nature. Never shall we be able to give God a Perfect service. With contemplation we shall do more for ourselves and others in one month, than we shall do without it in ten years" (Pére Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine*).

[3] The significance of the kind of state that *Yoga* is understood to be in Indian philosophy may well be illustrated by referring to the following passage from Schelling's *Philosophical Letters upon Dogmatism and Criticism*: "In all of us there dwells a secret marvellous power of freeing ourselves away from external things, and of so discovering to ourselves the eternal in us in the form of unchangeability. This presentation of ourselves to ourselves is the most truly personal experience, upon which depends everything that we know of the supra-sensual world. This presentation shows us for the first time what real existence is, whilst all else only appears to be. It differs from every presentation of the sense in its perfect freedom, while all other presentations are bound, being overweighted by the burden of the object. . . . This intellectual presentation of the sense occurs when we cease to be our own object, when, withdrawing into ourselves, the perceiving image merges in the self-perceived. At that moment we annihilate time, but time or rather eternity itself (the timeless) is in us. The external world is no longer an object for us, but is lost in us."

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SECTION EIGHT

BRAHMANICAL THEISM

BRAHMANICAL theism had been current in the minds of Hindu humanity since the utterance in the *Rig-Veda* of the first hymn to Varuna the One God. But the alternate exaltation of each of the several gods of the Vedic pantheon, as well as of the deities of the original inhabitants of India, by the Aryans, during the period of the *Brahmanas*, the Upanishads, and the Epics, only produced a number of minor theistic cults, none of which was strong enough to challenge the rise of Buddhism and Jainism. About the beginning of the Christian era, however, two of the three deities who clothed the creating, preserving, and destroying aspects of the universe as conceived by the Puranas, stood out among others as the recipients of chief honours—Vishnu, the preserver, and Sakti the feminine principle, Siva, the destroyer. The worship of each of these deities became gradually embodied in two strong devotional cults, the Vaishnava and the Saiva, which became formidable rivals of Buddhism and Jainism, and finally absorbed both these religions. From a consideration of the roles played by the gods of the Trimurti in the active manifested world, i.e. as creators, had arisen the conception of their *Saktis* or powers, their female counterparts. Saraswati was the consort of Brahma, Lakshmi of Vishnu, Kali, Parvati, or Devi of Siva. Around the last of these goddesses arose the cult of Sakti. During a long period of fifteen centuries or more these three sects have been the chief pillars of Hinduism, and the inspirational source of an unceasing activity of craft production in the making of the images of divinities.

(*a*) VAISHNAVISM

Vaishnavism originally began in the worship of Vishnu, the gracious Rig-Vedic Sun-god, who had been exalted to become the Blessed Cosmic Spirit in the period of the *Brahmanas*, and been later conceived as the Absolute Supreme Soul entering the individual souls. He was supposed to be incarnated in Vasu-Deva. Vasu-Deva was given the name of Bhagvata (the worshipful and the adorable), after which his followers came to be known as *Bhagvatas*. The cult of the *Bhagvatas* was sometimes known as *Ekantika Dharma* (the religion of love and devotion to the One). Vishnu was also conceived as the Preserver, as the loving guardian of all the people in the ceaseless change of the Cosmic Life, in the Puranic Trimurti. Another incarnation of Vishnu was Krishna, the son of Vasu-Deva, and the sage who is the real hero of the *Mahabharata* and associated with Gopala Krishna, the cowherd god of an aboriginal tribe called the Abhiras.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Vasudeva Krishna gives, as we have noted, a consistent exposition of the philosophy of life, reconciling the doctrine of God as an Absolute

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Reality with His appearance in various forms. Thus the Supreme God, within reach of the active citizen of the world, as the object of ritualistic worship in a language which, as may have become obvious from the passages of the *Gita* cited in my exposition of the Epics and from those that immediately follow, is very similar in spirit to the conception of God as incarnated in the world as the conception is put forth in the Bible. "I am the Self inwardly dwelling in all born beings, the beginning and the middle and the end of born beings am I. Of the gods I am Vishnu, of the luminaries I am the Sun ; I am Life and I am Death ; all this universe is strung upon Me as rows upon a thread."[1] "When any devotee seeks to worship any form with faith, it is none other than Myself that bestows that steadfast faith, and when by worshipping any forms he wins what he desires, it is none other than Myself that grants his prayers. Howsoever men approach Me, so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine."[2]

About the fourth century A.D., the Vasudeva Krishna cult had become well established as the Bhagavata or Pancratra religion, and came to be represented in Gupta art. The legends of the loves of the cowherd god Krishna and his consort Radha, current among the Abhiras, had become attached to Vaishnavism, and in that form it continued to exercise its influence on a great part of Hindu society, till in the eighth century A.D. the assertion of the pure monism of an attributeless God as the only real existence by Sankaracharya provided a set-back to it.

The need to define Ishvara so that men may not merely "believe for practical ends what all the time is metaphysically false," as the God of religious worship had come to be on account of Sankaracharya's reduction of God to an abstract idea, was felt by Ramanuja in the eleventh century. And he reinterpreted the Reality of Sankaracharya as an "embodied soul," i.e. capable of incarnation in the world. The principle of devotional worship which had tended to become inconsistent in the hands of Sankaracharya thus regained its former force.

Nimbarka, a Brahmin who lived at Mathura in the twelfth century, also helped to revive the devotional side of Vaishnavism by stressing the passionately ecstatic worship, not only of Krishna, but also of his mistress Radha, an aspect of the religion which Ramanuja had been led to neglect, perhaps on account of his belief in devotion as pure meditation engendered by his deeply speculative leanings. Vaishnavism, in the form in which it had now come to be understood, that is as a religion of love and devotion to a personal and immanent God manifested in the world in individual souls, inspired all mediaeval art and poetry in the 12th Century. In Eastern India the lord Jayadeva wrote with passionate ardour about the love of Krishna and Radha. Rajput painting of the 17th and 18th centuries has its source in it, and the hymns of Chandidas and Vidyapathi, of the fifteenth century, which so much influenced the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, are indebted to it. The themes of Vaishanava poets and artists were generally derived from the legends of the loves of Krishna and his mistresses interpreted in the light of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* Krishna considered as the Divine Soul dancing with his mistresses the human souls, round and round in the ring dance was a convenient symbol to illustrate the abstract relation of the God to

[1] "All authority has been given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18).
[2] "My yoke is easy and My burden light" (Matt. xi. 30).

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human beings. The mode of expression of Vaishnava poets and artists is more imagist than allegorical, in the sense in which "in imagist art things are what they suggest, while allegory, however appropriate, is always arbitrary: to understand the Krishna lila as an allegory is to misunderstand it, since it is neither fanciful nor pseudo-historical, but a drama perpetually enacted in the heart of every *bhakta* or votary."[1]

Madhava, or Anandatiratha as he was alternatively called, attacked Sankaracharya in the thirteenth century, and denounced him as an incarnation of some demon who was sent to mankind to propagate disbelief by separating God from the world. He postulated a dualism by which besides the reality of God, the efficient cause of the universe, that of individual souls was also acknowledged, and the realisation of salvation was declared to lie in the adoration of Vayu, the wind, the son of Vishnu, who was supposed to be reincarnated in Madhava himself. The philosophical background of Vaishnavism was thus further strengthened.

Ramananda (considered as the fifth in apostolic succession from Ramanuja), who lived towards the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century, revolted against the caste system, and stressed the position of Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*, as an incarnation of the Supreme Vishnu in the Vaishnava pantheon.

Kabir, who lived in the fifteenth century, followed Ramananda's footsteps as an adorer of Rama, but having been brought up in the family of a Muhammadan weaver, denounced idolatry, and brought a trait of pantheistic Sufism to bear upon the Vaishnava conception of God.

Tulsi Das (1532-1623), the author of a Hindi version of the *Ramayana*, popularised the *bhakti* worship of Rama among the masses, and his influence still persists through his Hindi version of the *Ramayana*, the *Ramacaritmanas* (the lake of the deeds of Rama), generally called the bible of Hindustan.

In the sixteenth century two energetic workers in the cause of the faith were Vallabha, a South Indian Brahmin resident at Mathura, in the north of India, and Chaitanya, a Bengali mystic. The former vigorously stressed the worship of the boy-god Krishna, through a rather exaggeratedly dramatic ritual ; the latter was enchanted by the conception of Divine love as concretised in the amorous dalliances of Radha and Krishna, and sought with great fervour to enhance the interest of the Vaishnavas in that aspect of his belief, and in the singing of devotional hymns and dancing as forms of ceremonial.

Various other reformers such as Vithoba, Nam Dev, Tuka Ram, etc., each in his own way stressed anew the main formula of Vaishnava belief, which may be summed up in the words of a Hindu sage "the worship of the Impersonal laid no hold on my heart."

The Vaishnavas considered the icons worshipped in the temples as material incarnations of the Supreme Vishnu, along with his ten usually recognised *avatars* (manifestations).[2] This remarkable position given to images is adequately summed up

[1] Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of Indian Collections*, Boston, p. 23.

[2] Vishnu is but a general name for what in reality constitutes a considerable variety of different figures, to each of which attaches a different name. Ordinarily, however, the figure of Vishnu is symbolised with his four attributes : the mace, the lotus, the conch, and the wheel (discus). See B. B. Bidyabinod, "Varieties of the Vishnu Image," *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 2.

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by Govindacharya Svamin in the *Yatindra-matadipika*, when he says that the Deity "deigns to descend with His immaterial or spiritual person into any material substance as may be lovingly chosen by His votary, lending Himself to the sweet will of His worshipper in all details of service."

(*b*) SAIVISM

Siva, the Supreme God of the Saivas, like the favourite deities of the other popular cults, traces his ancestry to the pregnant womb of the ancient aboriginal culture. The terrible and destructive aspects of nature, manifested in its angry rains and windstorms and violent earthquakes were, like the beautiful aspects of nature (the ugly and the beautiful being for the Hindus equally parts of God), early clothed by the poet's fancy in the concrete forms of Rudra, the wild howler. In order to propitiate his wrath prayers were offered to him, flattering eulogies sung, sacrifices made in his honour. Already towards the end of the Vedic period he had been raised to the dignity of the Supreme, the beneficent, and the benign Siva.

The influence of the native faiths, which the Aryans met during the process of their occupation of the Gangetic valley, led to the identification of Siva with desolate burning-grounds, giant mountains, and dense forests, and he became the idol of worship of thieves, savages, and other wild dregs of humanity, who sought sanctuary in those unfrequented resorts of gloom and silence. Soon, however, he was dragged from the abyss of ignobility to which he had sunk, and assigned certain philosophical attributes, so that he might be made venerable enough to occupy, like the other deities, the throne of Supreme Godship. He was described as being manifested in fire, water, air, and all animate things. Following the composition of the Puranas, Siva had a place in the Trimurti. In mediaeval times, however, the personal side of Siva came to be more stressed. The Pancratra religion, founded by Pasupati, honoured him, for instance, in his wild and destructive aspects, and the Agamic Saiva cult revered him as the personal Supreme. Siva was regarded as *Pati* (the Lord), of *Pasu* (the flock), joined with *Pasa* (the bond), which last is constituted by *anava* (ignorance), *karma* (deeds), and *maya* (illusion). He is the creator of the world, its instructor and redeemer. The Human soul attains pure bliss by uniting with him and through gradual renunciation of the world, exercising *bhakti* and by seeing everything in him.

Raised almost to the position of Supreme Godhood are the two sons of Siva, Kartikeya, the god of war, who is illustrated in art as mounted on the peacock, proud and pompous, and denoting the glory of war; and Ganesha, the little child with the elephant's head, who as the god of worldly wisdom is frequently to be seen in Indian temples. Ganesha is the protector of households, and symbolises the common sense by which men win the goods of this world. His elephant's head signifies sagacity which is the chief quality of business men. His vehicle is the mean, the earth-burrowing rat. He is, however, not altogether without intuition, since intuition is reflected even in commonsensical reason. Ganesha is a "jovial, well-disposed deity," whose name the other gods allow to be invoked first in sacrificial ceremonies.

About the seventh century Agamic Saivism spread to the Tamil and Dravida

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country, i.e. South India, and a vast body of devotional art and literature grew up in honour of Siva. The literature, mainly poetical, is embodied in the hymns of such men as Tirunamsambhandha; and his contemporary Appar, a Jain who became a Saivite Sundara; Mannikavasagar; Kundraditya; the ancestor of Raja Raja Chola, who ruled the Chola Empire in A.D. 984-985; Trimula; Nambi Andar Nambi.

Saiva art has been dedicated, mainly, to the making of stone and bronze images of Siva (*Lingam* and *Nataraja*) for use in the temples. Of these the Nataraja bronzes are well known as signifying the concept of Siva as the Lord of the dancers. Dr. Coomaraswamy, who has done so much to make the Nataraja images known in the world, has summarised the legend on which they are founded from the *Koyil Puranam*. "Siva appeared in disguise, amongst a congregation of ten thousand sages, and in the course of disputation confuted them and so angered them thereby, that they endeavoured by incantations to destroy him. A fierce tiger was created in sacrificial flames, and rushed upon him, but smiling gently, he seized it with his sacred hands, and with the nail of his little finger stripped it of its skin, which he wrapped about himself as if it had been a silken cloth. Undiscouraged by failure, the sages renewed their offerings, and there was produced a monstrous serpent, which he seized and wreathed about his neck. Then he began to dance; but there rushed upon him a last monster in the shape of a hideous, malignant dwarf. Upon him the God pressed the tip of his foot and broke the creature's back so that it writhed upon the ground; and so with his last foe prostrate, Siva resumed the dance of which the gods were witnesses."[1]

Another interpretation of the legend is that "he wraps about him as a garment, the tiger fury of human passion; the guile and malice of mankind, he wears as a necklace; and beneath his feet is for ever crushed the embodiment of evil."[2]

The dance of Siva is also the highest ideal of the art of dancing, not only as a symbol of perfect grace and rhythm, but as embodying "a dramatisation of the five activities—evolution, continuation, destruction, illusion and enlightenment—which constitute the world process."[3] And, in its rendering of the philosophical concept of becoming or change, Nataraja is a counterpart of the seated Buddha image which represents Being or Equipoise.

(c) SAKTISM

The cult of the Saktas or Sakti worshippers is built around the idea of female energy as being the mother of the world, the essence of Reality, the secret of the Cosmos. It centres mainly around one incarnation of feminine power, Kali, Devi or Sakti, Uma, Parvati. Kali, as the consort of Siva, was the recipient of due honour from the Dravidians and the Aryans in the Vedic Age. But just as Siva became infused with awe and terror at the hands of the aboriginal tribes, so his consort, too, came to be regarded as a terrible goddess: *Kali* (black or female, time as destroyer); *Kapali* (wearer of skulls); *Mahakali* (the great destroyer); *Chandi* (angry); *Karalla* (fright-

[1] Coomaraswamy, *Aims of Indian Art*, pp. 17-18.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Coomaraswamy, *Dance of Shiva*, pp. 56-67.

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ful, victory); dwelling in the forests and frequenting the wilds, and to be propitiated by offerings of animal or human sacrifice.

Later, however, the idea of *Sakti*, or power, came to be associated with her, and she was raised to the honour of Supreme Godhood as the great mother. "As the lightning is born of the clouds and disappears with the clouds, so *Brahman* and all the other gods take birth from Kali and will disappear in Kali." In this capacity she had come to be regarded as the Supreme Mother who evolves the universe and destroys it, or rather dissolves it into herself (since gods do not destroy), to create it again.[1]

The general philosophical position of the Sakta cult is essentially Vedantic, the relation of the One (God) and the many (forms). " As an organic or dynamic system it reinterprets all in terms of Power from the atom of matter, which is said by modern science to be a reservoir of tremendous energy, to the Almighty, which is the commonest name in all religion for God. It is the cult of Power, both as partial and the whole, as the worshipper may desire. God is here regarded under twin aspects : as Power-holder or 'male' Siva, and as Power or Sakti, the Divine Spouse and Mother."[2]

The Saktas describe the process of creation on the analogy of the doctrine that the world was created when desire arose within the mind of the Supreme Being, by figuratively declaring that when Siva and Sakti are possessed of desire they love and the world is created. Siva-Sakti thus becomes manifest in the universe of man and nature, and limits itself, loses its perfection in the imperfection of the world. Then there arises in the soul of men and women the corresponding desire to attain Perfection. Some of them practise good deeds and return to the Mother, others continue to be born and reborn in the endless series of universes until their consciousness is pricked, too, to a longing for Perfection, and by practising the good life they realise salvation, become one with Siva-Sakti.

The worship of Sakti is carried on by concentration on the three aspects of the Divine Mother : (1) as the Supreme Goddess presiding over the world ; (2) as the creator ; (3) as destroyer.

The first aspect of the Mother is symbolised in *Sriyantra*, a diagrammatic representation in which Sakti is shown in the form of a point of concentrated power.

Since " procreation is the individual counterpart of Cosmic Creation," the second aspect of Sakti, i.e. as the creator of the universe, is sensibly represented in her generative embrace with Siva. The concrete images expressing this philosophical aspect of the evolution of the universe are often considered obscene by Christian observers, but in India, where all life is sacramental, the marriage of male and female is characteristically interpreted with the highest spirituality as a symbol of the union of the Divine Soul and the human soul ; and, as the exalted ritual of ordinary marriage shows, there is no vulgar motive necessarily attached to sensuality.

As destroyer of the world, i.e. as withdrawing it into herself in order to recreate, Sakti is portrayed in different ways, one of which is as a ten-armed goddess "dark

[1] The cult of the Great Mother is one of the oldest in the world, and was practised by various peoples of antiquity. See Glotz, *Aegean Civilisation*, and Denis Saurat, *Literature and the Occult Tradition*, D. H. Lawrence, *Etruscan Places and Fantasia of the Unconscious*.

[2] Sir John Woodroffe, "The Indian Magna Mater," *Indian Arts and Letters*, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 66 ff., 1926.

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blue like a rain cloud," wielding the sword of knowledge which severs man from ignorance (that is from partial knowledge) and gives him Perfect Experience, and wearing a garland of human heads which (exoterically the letters of the alphabet, as well as the symbols of the universe) are destroyed by her.

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SECTION NINE

THE TANTRA

THE *Tantra* constitutes the scriptures specifically suited to supply the needs of the *Kali-yuga* (iron age).

The chief aim of the literature is to reconcile "Vedanta monism and dualism," "to give liberation to the *jiva* (individual) by a method through which individual truth is reached through a dualistic world."[1]

The fundamental philosophic position from which it starts is really the Vedic as it has come down through all the stresses of history. The universe (*Samsara*) is "the moving thing," the everchanging flux of Heraclitus, and the manifestation of Siva the unchanging as *Sakti*, the changing power presented in the forms of relative dualistic experience, incomplete, as against complete or perfect experience (*Nirvana*). The ultimate reality, *Siva-Sakti* (unmanifested-manifested), is realised by an ascent from the manifest to the unmanifest, through the exercise of *Sadhana* (ritual worship) and and its more difficult correlate, *Yoga*.

The *Tantra* takes its stand by the Vedantic hypothesis that "there is no Mind without Matter, or Matter without Mind, except in dreamless sleep, when the latter is wholly or partially withdrawn." And "the mind has always an object," that is to say, "there is no vacuous mind." In a way almost akin to the *Samkhya*, it is further held that the mind is not a conscious mental entity, but an "unconscious quasi-material force," having "the power to limit itself, i.e. to assume the habits and forms of the environments into which it is put, and to the extent to which limited experience appear, as unconscious of its limitations." In apprehending things the mind takes the forms of the objects apprehended, and builds up a world, the reality of which it dogmatically assumes and never questions. "By meditation on anything as the Self, one becomes that thing."

This psychological truth is made by the *Tantra*, the basis of all religious ritual. For "as the mind must have an object which again shapes the mind, the ritual selects a good object, namely, the Divinity of worship with all good attributes, and who alone is Real. The *Sadhaka* (worshipper) meditates on and worships that. Continued thought, repetition, the engagement of the body in mental action, co-operate to produce a lasting and good tendency in the mental substance. Sincere and continued efforts effect the transformation of the worshipper into a likeness with the Divinity worshipped. For, as he who is always thinking bad thoughts becomes bad, so he who thinks Divine thoughts becomes himself Divine. The transformation (of the worshipper to God-

[1] Sir John Woodroffe, "The Psychology of Hindu Religious Ritual," *Indian Arts and Letters*, Vol. I, No. 2, p. 68, 1925. Throughout my survey of the *Tantra* I have based myself on Sir John Woodroffe, whose excellent summary of the vast literature of the *Tantra* in his monumental *Tantrik Texts* and other writings, is one of the great documents in the Library of Comparative Religion.

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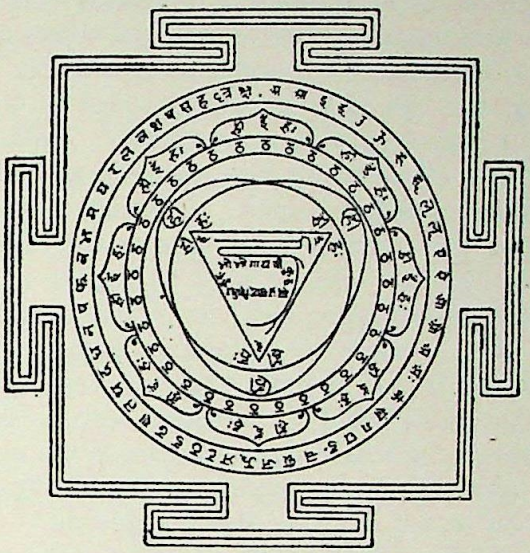
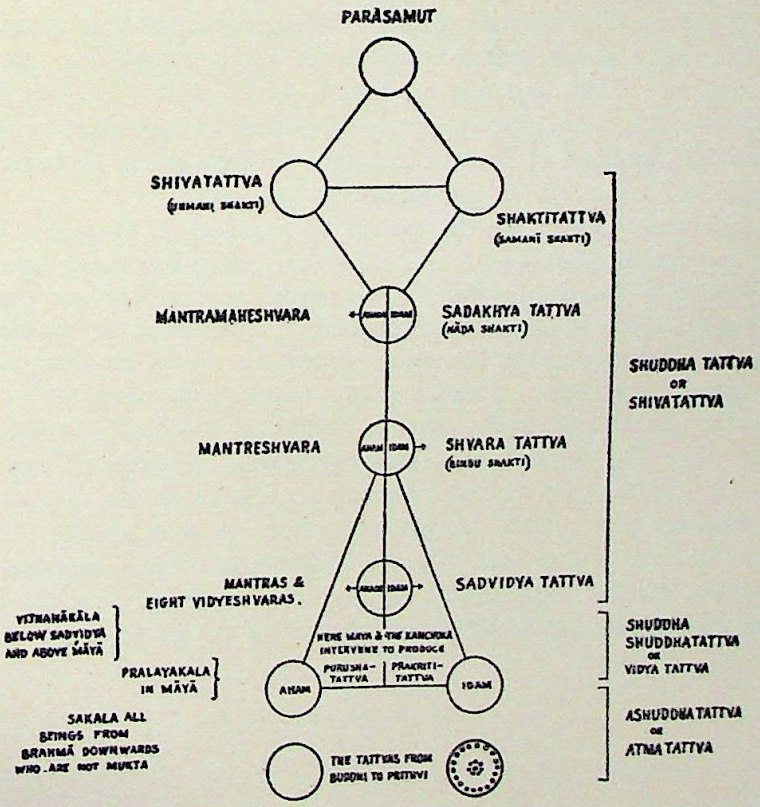


GAYATRI YANTRA.



This evolution of consciousness is described in the scheme of the Thirty-six Tattvas

Elura; Kailasanatha. From the south-east. c. A.D. 750-850.

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hood), which is commenced in *Sadhana*, is completed in *Yoga* (union), when the difference between the worshipper and the worshipped ceases in the unitary consciousness which is ecstasy or *Samadhi*, or transcendent experience."

Since, however, the "Divinity cannot be seized by the mind any more than air can be grasped by a pair of tongs, it is necessary . . . to have something placed before one as a representative of something else, which is what the Sanskrit terms, *Pratika*, *pratima*, for the object worshipped mean. This may be an external object or a mental one." According as the external object or a mental object is worshipped, the rite is called "gross" or "subtle." But it must be kept in mind that "we do not understand by the word 'gross' anything bad. It is merely used in contradistinction to the word 'subtle.' " Still, there is an important difference between the two modes of worship : "the grossest is that in which there is no call upon imagination, that is, the image of three dimensions being worshipped. Less so is the painting on the flat ; then comes the emblem, such as *shalagrama* stone in the worship of Vishnu, and lastly, the *Yantra*, the (symbolistic) diagrammatic body of a (prayer verse) which is a geometrical formula for each god of the Hindu pantheon."

External worship is conducted by "physical acts, such as bodily prostrations, offerings of real flowers," etc., mental worship by imagining the Divinity "according to the meditational forms of *dhyana mantra* (mental description) given in the scriptures," as the recipient of prayers and offerings.

In carrying on the external worship through images, a preliminary ceremony is to invoke the Deity in the actual image used, and a concluding ceremony of bidding the Deity depart. This does not, of course, mean that the Deity is made to come and go, but that the worshipper suggests to himself the presence of God at the time of worship and His absence at its termination. The image is, therefore, just treated as a *via media*, and must not be considered as the God.

The whole character of the ritual may be summed up by saying that it is a means to awaken the slumbering *Sakti*, the sensational self of the worshipper, so that he may realise his Real Self (*Siva-Sakti*). Sakti or the mother source of power is said to be dormant, at the base of the spine. It is considered possible by believer in the Kundalini Yoga to excite vibrations in the being through the spine, so that the psycho physical vibrations are slowly generated and the Sakti power realised, so as to envelope the whole body and rise to the brain to open the thousand lotuses in the head, as it were, to illuminate or ultimate understanding.

I shall show the connection of this psychology of religious ritual with art later. Meanwhile, it may be said that the formal elucidation in the *Tantra* of the theory of religious worship which had, as we have seen, been originally put forward in the *Brahmanas*, and which had been vaguely understood though universally practised ever since, is of the utmost importance, because it is a definite statement of the kind of ceremonial which it is suggested was employed by the artist, in the *Silpa-shastras* (art-treatises).

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PART TWO

THE AESTHETIC HYPOTHESIS

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Maya's Dream, Amravati.

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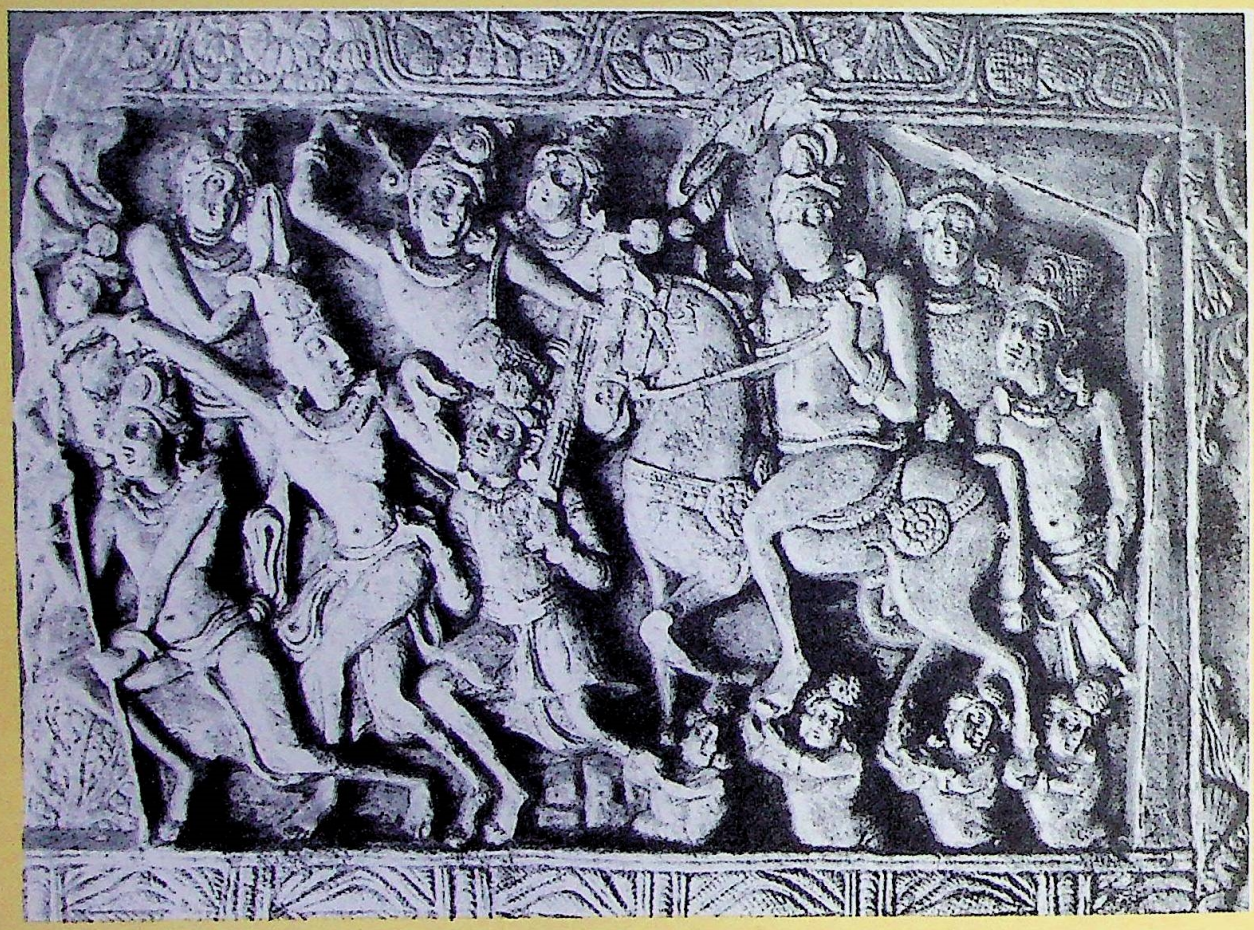

Great Departure . Nagarjunakonda.

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Mathura Yakshi.

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Sanchi Yakshi.

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Sarnath Buddha.

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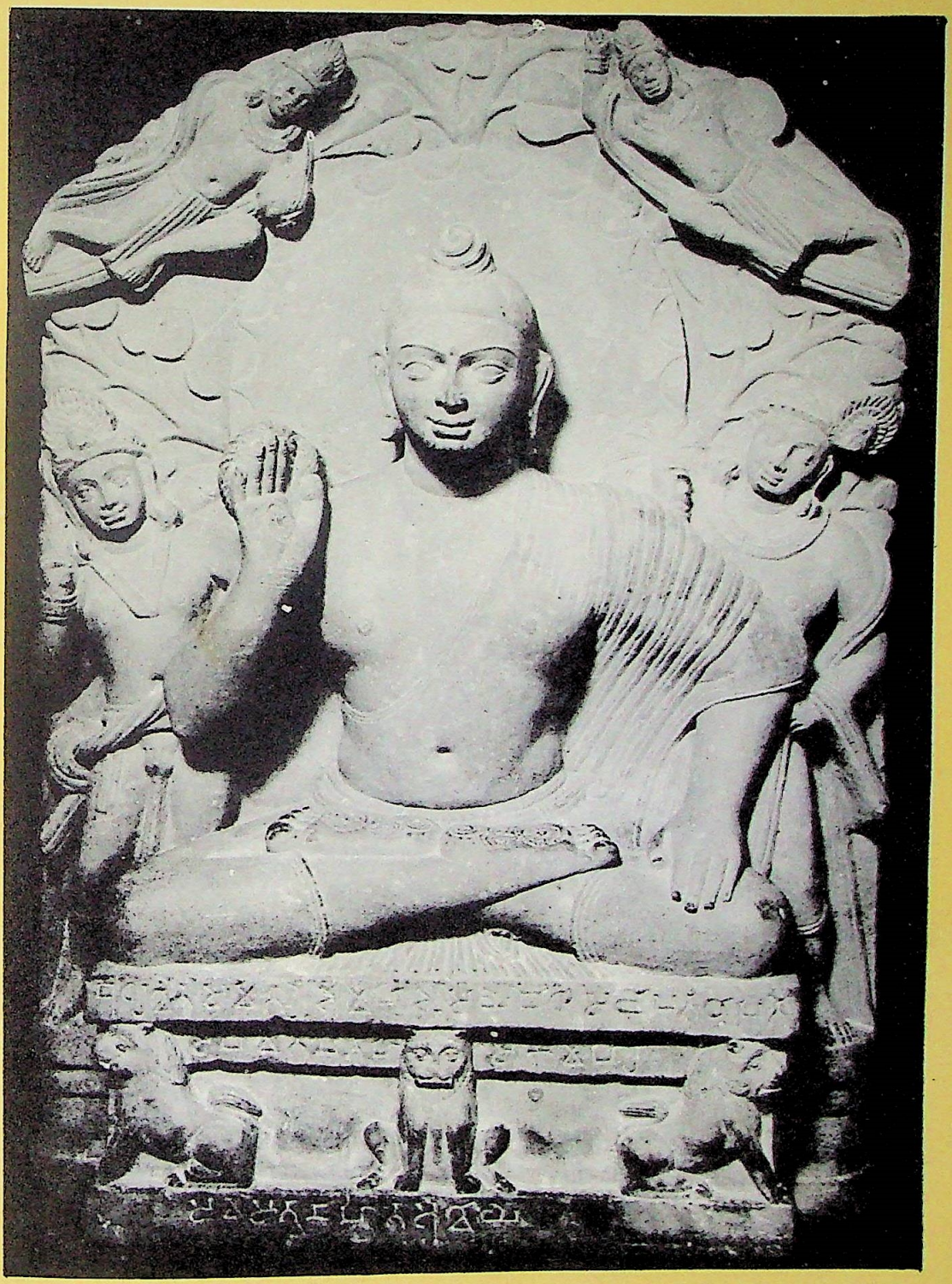

Katra Buddha, Mathura.

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Bodh Gaya Buddha.

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THE AESTHETIC HYPOTHESIS

THE Hindu view of art proper may be said to lie in the aesthetic conception of *rasa*. A work of art may be said to be *rasavant* (a derivative adjective of *rasa*, meaning "having rasa") ; the critic, connoisseur, or spectator who enjoys *rasa* may be called *rasika* ; the act in and through which the aesthetic emotion is enjoyed or contemplated may be technically styled *rasavadana*.

A consideration of the sense in which the word *rasa* was used in the Vedas and the Upanishads might well prepare the way for the elucidation of its meaning in the hands of the rhetoricians and writers on poetics.

The word occurs in the *Rig-Veda* in the sense of juice (of the soma plant).[1] It is also used in the earlier hymns to signify water and milk.[2] And sometimes it is applied to mean flavour.[3] In the *Atharva-Veda*, *rasa* is used, not only in its earlier meaning as the juice of plants and herbs, but is also applied to the sap of grain,[4] and although it has come less to signify water and milk, one very interesting and important notion has become connected with it—that of "savour" or "taste." For instance the poet prays :

"May the satisfying savour of the honey mixed come to me."[5]

During the Upanishadic times the meaning of *rasa* developed, like that of most other Vedic conceptions, from the particular to the universal. From its signification as the essential element in concrete plants, grain, water, and milk, it has come to be an abstract idea of "essential element," or "essence."[6] For instance :

"Life breath or the vital air is the essence of the limbs."

It still continued, however, to be used for "savour" and "taste."[7] The philosophers declared that man "knows the taste by the tongue," and the word became a denominative verb, "to taste."[8] In the *Taittiriya* and the *Maiterya* Upanishads a great step forward was taken by the fusion of *rasa* as essence with a new meaning—the highest state of joy, an expression of the nature of the Supreme Being as reflected in the "self-luminous consciousness" of the Upanishadic seer.

"He is *Rasa*, having obtained Him the soul becomes full of bliss."[9]

Ananda Vardhana, a writer on poetics, refers to the second chapter of the *Ramayana* in support of his contention that the notion of *rasa* first came to be applied to literature by the poet Valmiki. The story is related that Valmiki was out one day gathering sacrificial wood and grass in the forest when he saw a pair of Karunca birds joyfully twittering as they sat on the branch of a tree. An arrow came that very instant from an invisible hunter and struck the male bird, which instantly fell. The sage was filled with immense grief to reflect that only a moment ago the poor

[1] IX. 63. 13. and IX. 65. 15.
[2] VIII. 72. 13.
[3] V. 44. 13.
[4] III. 31. 10.
[5] III. 13. 15.
[6] *Brh. Up.*, I. 3. 19.
[7] *Ibid.*, III. 2. 4.
[8] *Prasna. Up.*, IV. 2.
[9] *Taittiriya Up.*, II. 7.

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creature was happily singing, and now it lay dead in the dust, while its companion fluttered about it shrieking with anguish. Long did the incident trouble Valmiki's mind that day, and the poignant tragedy lay heavy on his heart till he burst out in an ecstatic verse of exquisite melody and pathos, and became lost in the forgetfulness of pure bliss. This was the first *sloka* (verse) invented. The poet tried later introspectively to analyse the whole state of his mind from the moment when the original feeling arose to the time when he attained the boundless joy, and arrived at the conclusion that "that which proceeded from me who was overpowered by pathos shall be nothing but poetry or rhythmic expression"—*rasa*.

According to Ananda Vardhana, the various steps in the process which led to the utterance of rhythmic expression by Valmiki are: (1) the perceptual experience of the event; (2) the transference of the perceptual experience to the imagination, as the cause of that feeling of pathos which translated itself into (3) the outburst of poetry, and led to (4) the attainment of pure joy. This last blissful state Ananda Vardhana regarded as the feeling which poetry, or any sort of rhythmic expression, should evoke in the mind of the critic.

The science of poetry, which started when Valmiki analysed the nature of his rhythmic expression, came to be known as *Alamkara-shastra*, or *Sahitya-shastra*. The first title means the science of the beautiful expression of the beautiful; the literal meaning of the second is that the science of the expression of beauty is the true companion of the soul. The systematic development of this science went on for nearly two thousand years, i.e. from before the Christian era to the eighteenth century, and there are accounted some eight hundred and seventy-two major works on the aesthetics of poetry. But as my chief concern here is to explain the theory of *rasa* in its relation to art, I will not go into a detailed survey of all these books on poetics, but merely give an exposition of the meaning of *rasa*, the way it comes to be, and what its implications are when applied to a work of art.

What then is *rasa*, and how exactly is it evoked?

At the outset, it must be noted that it is difficult, if not impossible, to define the word *rasa* positively, because the conception implied in it is intuitively realised rather than sensibly experienced. But from its elaborate exposition, analysis, and classification by the sage Bharata in his *Natya-shastra*, in the various text-books culled from his pages, and in the commentaries based on him, its meaning may be suggested by saying that it is that state of bliss through the realisation of the inner worlds of faculty and experience which is aroused by the spectacle (dramatic, acrobatic, plastic, or pictorial) of a rhythmic expression and controlled emotion.

In an ordinary way it may be said to be caused by a work of art produced by the deliberate manipulation by an artist or poet of the emotions or feelings which formed the inspirational centre of his or her consciousness after he or she had envisaged a certain aspect or aspects of the universe. Let me illustrate the point by considering the history of a work of art. (1) The poet or the artist has been stirred, say, by the sight or thought of lovers embracing each other into recognising the presence of a feeling or emotion of love; (2) he is possessed by this emotion and sees it as a coherent experience with the inner eye; (3) then he translates his internal experience,

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or his vision, as we may call it, into an external form, by speech if he is an actor, by the written word if he is a writer, by colours if he is a painter; (4) and then is produced (all things being perfectly assimilated) a perfect work of art, embodying the emotion of love, which the spectator or critic who has himself had the experience of being in love, and who retains impressions of that experience, is stimulated into enjoying as an abstract, universal experience, *rasa*, pure joy, above the emotion in the picture or the poem, or in his own experience.

This is very simply the process by which *rasa* may be evoked, but it is not quite so simple as it seems. For, first of all, the artist never knows when his creation might evoke *rasa* in the critic. Nor, indeed, does he care whether it will evoke that state. He is in love with his theme, and just dedicates himself to render it from sheer abundance of feeling, which makes it impossible for him to contain himself within himself. His work may also evoke *rasa* through the *rasika's* own capacity to be delighted, "not only from the character of the hero to be imitated, nor because the work aims at the production of aesthetic emotion."[1]

The demands that an artist must fulfil if his work is to be potentially capable of exciting *rasa* may, however, be noted. The artist is expected to have either a natural or acquired genius for noticing things. That is to say, he must have a very keen receptivity, acutely sensitive to life. And he should have a deep consciousness or vision of the illimitable resources in which he can mirror the Cosmos.[2]

The *karma* (good and bad deeds) of every man or the race in which he is born as well as the background of his experience determine his genius, but education and training also mould a man's powers. If he has the preliminary capacity to feel intensely, he can be helped to adumbrate the realities which cannot be humanly formulated through means of *Yoga* (contemplation) practices. I shall deal with the *Yoga* method enjoined to artists in the next section. Meanwhile let me notice some other considerations which make a work of art evoke *rasa*.

Rasa is a very subtle state, requiring the pervasive influence of several different kinds of emotion, and a host of feelings, into fusion, before it may be evoked. The Hindu writers on poetics classified emotions into (1) lasting, (2) incidental or transitory. There are eight lasting emotions: (1) *Rati* (love), (2) *Hasa* (laughter), (3) *Soka* (sorrow), (4) *Krodha* (anger), (5) *Utsaha* (high-spiritedness), (6) *Bhaya* (fear), (7) *Jugupsa* (repugnance or disgust), (8) *Vismaya* (astonishment). A ninth class, not generally admitted is *Santa*, that mental state in which we regard the world as transitory or ephemeral.

Of the incidental emotions there are as many as thirty-three in number: self-disparagement; debility or weakness; apprehension of encountering what is desired and misgivings about obtaining the desired; indolence or aversion to activity; depression due to poverty or pain; painful reflection due to painful memories; perplexity or distraction; recollection; concentration or repose of the mind in contentment; shame or shrinking from pain or censure; unsteadiness or haste in constantly changing from one object to another; joy; agitation or flurry due to pleasant happenings;

[1] *Dasarupa*, IV. 47.
[2] "Creation comes from the depths—the mystic will say from God" (E. M. Forster).

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loss of faculty or activity, meaning disability to do any kind of work; arrogance; despair of success; impatience; drowsiness; possession of the self by a daemoniac fancy, or the influence on the self of some astrological phenomena; sleep; walking; impatience of opposition or rivalry; disguise of real feelings; sternness or cruelty; apprehension; sickness; absence of reflection or restraint; death; fear without cause; consideration or discussion.

Emotions, both lasting and transitory, manifest themselves in either of the following ways: (1) they precede or accompany a particular state of mind or body; (2) they appear as the external forms which indicate the existence of a mental state; and (3) they are involuntarily exhibited by the person who possesses them.

The eight lasting emotions in conjunction with their associated groups of feeling may evoke eight different forms of *rasa*. When we speak of eight different forms of *rasa*, however, we do not mean that *rasa* is either qualitatively or quantitatively divisible into eight species, but these eight are "the various colourings of one experience, and are arbitrary terms of rhetoric used only for convenience in classification; just as we speak of poetry categorically as lyric, epic, dramatic, etc., without implying that poetry is anything but poetry."[1] To enumerate the *rasas* corresponding to the emotions: (1) The emotion of love and the transitory feelings, longing, anxiety, raving, insanity, fever, stupor, death, are bound up with the *Sringara*, or the erotic *rasa*. (2) High-spiritedness and the incidental feelings, assurance, contentment, arrogance, and joy, are the signs of the *Vira*, or the heroic *rasa*. (3) Anger and the attendant feelings, indignation, intoxication, recollection, inconstancy, envy, cruelty, agitation, occur with the *Raudra rasa*, or the *rasa* of fury. (4) Mirth with its accompanying states, indolence, weariness, weakness, stupor, might evoke the *Hasya rasa*, or the *rasa* of comedy. (5) Astonishment and the feelings, joy, agitation, distraction, fright, may arouse the *Adbhuta rasa*, or the *rasa* of wonder. (6) The emotion of sorrow is conducive to the production of the *Karunca rasa*, the *rasa* of pathos, so-called from Valmiki's experience of it on seeing the death of the Karunca bird referred to above. (7) Disgust and the ephemeral feelings, agitation, sickness, provoke the *Bibhasta rasa*, or the *rasa* of indignation. The emotion of fear produces the *Bhayanka rasa*, or the *rasa* of terror.[2]

The *rasas* are also identified with certain colours and with certain divinities. For instance, *Sringara*, or the erotic *rasa*, is associated with *shamya*, or dark colour, and the god Vishnu; *Hasya*, or the comic *rasa*, with the colour white and the god Rama; *Raudra*, the furious *rasa*, and *Vira*, the heroic *rasa*, go with the colours red and the gods Indra and Rudra respectively; *Karunca*, or the *rasa* of pity, is allied to the grey hue and the god Varuna; *Bhayanka*, or the terrible *rasa*, is ascribed a black colour and the presiding deity *Yama*; *Bibhasta*, or the *rasa* of disgust, is connected with the blue colour and the god Siva, or Mahakala; *Adbhuta*, or the *rasa* of wonder, is assigned a yellow colour and the presiding deity Brahma.[3]

[1] Coomaraswamy, *Dance of Shiva*, p. 32.
[2] Compare the analysis of emotions and their bearing on art in Sully's *Outlines of Psychology*, and Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric*, Vol. II. Also Lord Kame's *Elements of Criticism*.
[3] "It would be vain to deny that certain kinds and tones of colour have a real correspondence with emotional states of mind" (Laurence Binyon).

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From the popular practice of representing *Ragas* and *Raginis* (musical modes) through the graphic arts which prevailed in India, it is evident that the Hindus firmly believed in the intimate relationship of the various arts in general, and of the graphic art and the art of music in particular. An anecdote on this question from an ancient *Silpa-shastra* (art-treatise) may be illuminating. A king once approached a sage and asked to be taught the methods of image-making. The following dialogue ensued :

KING.

O Sinless One ! Be good enough to teach me the methods of image-making.

SAGE.

One who does not know the laws of painting can never understand the laws of image-making.

KING.

Be then good enough, O Sage, to teach me the laws of painting.

SAGE.

But it is difficult to understand the laws of painting without any knowledge of the technique of dancing.

KING.

Kindly instruct me then in the art of dancing.

SAGE.

This is difficult to understand without a thorough knowledge of the laws of instrumental music.

KING.

Pray teach me the laws of instrumental music.

SAGE.

But the laws of instrumental music cannot be learnt without a deep knowledge of the art of vocal music.

KING.

If vocal music be the source and end of all the arts, reveal then to me, O Sage, the laws of vocal music.[1]

It must be noted that the presence of the above-mentioned permanent emotions among their respective groups of transitory feelings is absolutely essential if *rasa* is to be produced. The failure of the artist to weave the minor feelings into the central theme leads to a lack of unity and incoherence in his work. The sage Bharata says in his *Natya-shastra :*

> As a king to his subjects, as a *Master* to his disciples,
> Even so the master-motif is the Lord of all other motives.

On no account, however, must a minor-motif be made the master-motif, unless there is a sheer weight of conviction and sincerity behind it, for "the extended development of a transient emotion tends to the absense of *rasa*."[2] That is to say the work becomes sentimental.

Rasa may be evoked by any aspect of life treated by a great artist: "delightful or disgusting, exalted or lowly, cruel or kind, obscure or refined, actual or imaginary, there is no subject that cannot evoke *rasa* in man."[3] But here it must be noted that the treatment of life does not mean the imitation of nature. So far from being an imitation of nature, art is for the Hindus absolutely distinct from it: "In the limitless world of the poet's creation, the poet himself is the creator," says a well-known Indian

[1] Reference may here be made to Schopenhauer's view popularised by Pater that "all arts constantly tend to attain the condition of music."

[2] *Dasarupa*, IV. 45.

[3] *Ibid.*

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rhetorician ; "it (the world of his creation) lives and moves and has its being as it pleases him." "The poet's speech," says another famous Hindu writer on poetics, "creates a world which is not fettered by the laws of nature, which is of the very essence of joy, which is self-existent and not depending on anything else, and which brings into being a creation shining with the nine *rasas*." Art is thus for the Hindus essentially creative.

Of course, the elements from which the artist creates his work of art are taken from nature, but they are the alphabet out of which he moulds, by the deliberate exertion of his will, the lines and forms by which he conveys his meaning.[1] If *rasa* is, then, supposed to be evoked by the treatment of life, it is supposed to be created by the deliberate treatment of that aspect of life.[2] The Hindus carried even further this conception of the deliberateness of art, and maintained that perfect spontaneity in a work of art is attained only by a perfectly deliberate treatment, a treatment that leaves nothing to chance. The actors and the dancers are enjoined, for instance, in a Hindu treatise on Dramaturgy, to cultivate as complete and sure a mastery of gesture as the puppet showman possesses over the limbs of his puppets ; and the representations of the emotions of the hero to be portrayed should, it is declared, be absolutely mechanical, independent of the actor's or dancer's own feelings or emotions. Hence there is said to be no difference betwen the actor and the audience, because the actor can enjoy the universal joy of *rasa* while he is playing a part in the same impersonal way as the spectators watching him. As Dr. Coomaraswamy renders the point : "If he is moved by what he represents, he is moved as a spectator, and not as an artist. . . . Excellent art wears the airs of perfect spontaneity . . . that is an art which conceals art."[3]

That this dictum is no mere theory is borne out by the fact that in the art of dancing and drama the Hindus had developed an exhaustive gesture language in which each little movement of the body was defined as a noun, pronoun, verb and tense, etc., just as ordinary language is defined in grammar. I will quote some of the rules of gesture later. Here I may quote the distinguished authority on Indian art, already referred to so many times, to show how the actual works of Indian art that have come down to us, though apparently spontaneous, are in fact the result of a most careful and defined method. "The Ajanta frescoes," writes Dr. Coomaraswamy, "seem to show unstudied gesture and spontaneous pose, but actually there is hardly a position of the hand or of the body which has not a recognised name and a precise significance. The more deeply we penetrate the techinque of any typically oriental art, the more we find what appears to be individual, impulsive, and natural is actually long inherited, well considered, and well bred. Under these conditions life itself becomes a ritual."[4]

On the analogy of a discussion of the degrees of excellence of different kinds of

[1] "Beauty is no quality either of trees or pigments, but like every other value only comes into being as the result of a spiritual activity. Its *esse* is *percipi*" (Croce).
[2] "Art is the deliberate communication of feelings" (Tolstoy).
[3] Coomaraswamy and Dugrilla, *The Mirror of Gesture*, pp. 1-10.
[4] *Ibid.*

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poetry in the various treatises on poetics, a principle might be laid down with regard to the degree of excellence achieved by different forms of art. Just as the highest poetry is that which gives in a beautiful form a message of deep meaning and overloaded significance, so that art is highest which suggests the profoundest vision in the most perfect style. And just as in inferior poetry the sense is lost in an exaggerated ornamentation and over-embroidery, and the result is a charming narrative lacking any very subtle meaning, so in inferior art, mere narrative and description being emphasised, there is a corresponding lack of significance. Therefore, we must guard against the flowery rhetoric of narrative, and descriptive verse and art, and prefer the deep message of a simply wrought subject to the grandiloquent flummery of a work disguised in a scientifically elaborate metre and tricked out with all the hackneyed effusions of high-sounding poetry or "great" art.

The Hindus would seem, to the Western mind steeped in a strong belief in democracy, to expect rather too much from the *rasika*, the critic or the spectator. For *rasa* is enjoyed according to Dharmadatta "only by those who are competent." The ideal spectator is defined by Bharata as "one who is happy when the course of the drama is cheerful, melancholy when it is sorrowful, who rages when it is furious, and trembles when it is fearful."[1] In a word, he goes to the theatre to appreciate with sympathy what he sees.

The sensibility of the good critic as well as the artist may be either natural or acquired, or be a happy fusion of the two; but more often than not it is native, inherited through experience,[2] and with difficulty cultivated. Archaeologists or historians of art, like some of the most eager students of poetry, are seen not to have a right perception of *rasa*, and may, indeed, never have it, for instruction is not the purpose of art, but the evocation of joy in a mind potentially capable of realising it. "As for any man of simple intelligence," writes Dhanamjaya, "who says that from dramas, which distil joy, the gain is knowledge only as in the case of history and the like, homage to him, for he has averted his face from what is delightful."[3]

Not only must the critic be sympathetic, but he must have a conscious desire to have *rasa* evoked in him. He must exert his imagination to create in himself a state conducive to the enjoyment of art. "Those devoid of imagination, in the theatre, are but as woodwork, the walls and the stones."[4] This point is carried further by

[1] *Natya-shastra*. "Picture, poetry, and every work of art produce no effect save on souls prepared to receive them" (Croce).

[2] The Classical Hindu poet, Kalidasa, showed the influence of a man's *karma* (past life) on his capacity to enjoy the things of the present when he said: "The reason why on seeing beautiful objects and hearing harmonious sounds, even a happy man becomes full of longing and melancholy is that he remembers, without the experience rising to the surface of his working consciousness, the companionships and enjoyments which he had in previous births, and which are an integral portion of his treasury of emotions." A similar view was in Rossetti's mind when he wrote:

O born with me somewhere that men forget,
And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
Known for my soul's birth-partner well enough.

[3] *Dasarupa*, I. 6.

[4] *Sahitya Darpana*.

"Some who have cold affections, sluggish imaginations, and no habits of observation can with difficulty discern beauty in anything; while others who are full of kindness and sensibility, and who have been accustomed to attend to all objects around, feel it almost in everything." Jeffrey, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article on "Aesthetics," 9th ed.

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Sukracharya (the author of *Sukranitisara*, a sociological text containing a section on the craft of image-making), when he says, "the defects of images are constantly destroyed by the power of the virtue of the worshipper who has his heart always set on God" ; and it is resuscitated by the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore : "In our country, those of the audience who are appreciative, are content to perfect the song in their own mind by the force of their own feeling."[1] And "if this attitude," says Dr. Coomaraswamy, "seems to us dangerously uncritical, that is to say dangerous to art, or rather to accomplishment, let us remember that it prevailed everywhere in all periods of great creative activity, and that the decline of art has always followed the decline of love and faith. Tolerance of an imperfect work of art may arise in two ways : the one uncritical, powerfully swayed by the sympathetic, and too easily satisfied with a very inadequate correspondence between content and form ; the other creative, very little swayed by considerations of charm, and able by force of the true imagination to complete the correspondence of content and form which is not achieved or not preserved in the original. Uncritical tolerance is prettiness or edification, and recoils from beauty that is "difficult" : creative tolerance is indifferent to prettiness or edification, and is able from a mere suggestion, such as an awkward 'primitive' or a broken fragment, to create or re-create a perfect experience."[2]

From my reference to the use of the word *rasa* in the Upanishads and the subsequent exposition of the way in which it comes to be, it may have become obvious that this conception of beauty is in the aesthetic world what *Ananda* is in the metaphysical, and *Ishvara* (God) in the religious. That it is really only the religio-philosophical hypothesis in a different dress, designed specifically to fit in with the experience of aesthetics, is confirmed by its frequent use in Indian literature interchangeably with its prototype.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad*, it might be recalled, had said : "He is *Rasa*, having attained Him the soul becomes full of bliss." It is possible that the earliest writers on Poetics knew of this, and consciously desiring to establish their science on the secure foundations of the *sarva-vidya-pralistha* (the basis of all sciences), as *Brahma-Vidya* (the science of the eternal) the knowledge of *Brahman* or philosophy had come to be known, they adopted the ideal *Ananda* of the mother science as *rasa* to be the ideal of Poetics also. The philosopher of the *Bhagavad-Gita* had indeed made an overture to rhetoricians when he made Sri Krishna, the symbol of the All-pervasive Cosmic Life, say : "I am the splendour of splendid things," and "whatsoever is . . . beautiful . . . understand that thou to go forth from a fragment of my Splendour." Sankaracharya, the author of the Vedanta system of pure monism, had declared that "*Brahman* is *rasa, rasa* is bliss." And the definitions of *rasa* throughout the literature on poetics and rhetorics echo these statements. For instance, Vishvanatha says in the *Sahitya Darpana* : "It (*rasa*) is pure, indivisible, self-manifested, compounded equally of

[1] *My Reminiscences*, pp. 134-135.

"If one has not studied things with a partiality full of love, what one thinks about them is not worth saying" (Goethe).

[2] Coomaraswamy, *Dance of Shiva*, p. 34.

"In order to appreciate a masterpiece, we must have some knowledge of the terms which the artist has used and the principles he has followed. We know the terms only when we have ourselves used them and the principles when we have tried to follow them" (a recent European critic).

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joy and consciousness, free of admixture with any other perceptions, the very twin brother of mystic experience (*Brahmasavadana Sahodarah*) and the very life of it is super-sensuous (*lokottra*) wonder."[1] Mammata, another rhetorician, talks of the "joy which is the crown of all the aims of life, which is immediately produced by the relish of *rasa*, and which so fills the mind that one is aware of nothing else." While Jagan-natha is still more explicit: "*Rasa* is that shining forth of the bliss of the soul where the barriers to its self-expression are removed, the bliss being expressed through love and other emotional states."[2] Achutarya would seem to regard it as a mirror of the Cosmos when he says that *rasa* is a reflected bliss—reflected as the beauty of a woman in a polished mirror.[3]

The metaphysical Absolute was described in the Upanishads as the Ultimate Reality which is "the internal *Atman* of all created things." But, although it permeates the differentiated universe of *maya* (appearance) and we can feel it in the veins of existence, we cannot know it, materially, through the senses. As I have shown above, the same is true of *rasa*. It is an ideal state, a transcendental mode of consciousness, in which the essences of things are intuitively apprehended, by plunging back, as it were, into the *mysterium tremendum* of life, in the manner of the poet who sees the meaning of things by the sudden flash of a vision, or of the philosopher who realises the wholeness of experience in a moment of illumination.[4] In the ordinary human way Hindu rhetoricians sought to describes *rasa* qualitatively and quantitatively, as the Vedic seers described the Absolute ideal of their aspiration, but it is no more definable or provable logically than is the Supreme Reality (*Ananda*). Of it, it may be said that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. "God put it into my head, and I cannot put it into yours," says the man who experiences it. "*Rasa*, which by the predominance of *sattvaguna* is full of limitless and spontaneous self-consciousness and bliss, which is free from the taint of intruding objects, which is akin to Brahmic bliss, whose life is super-worldly and of exquisite charm, is enjoyed as a state of union of enjoyer and the enjoyed by fortunate and happy discerners of delight."[5]

[1] "Beauty belongs to the transcendental and metaphysical order" (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*).
[2] "Beauty is the splendour of being shining from the proportioned parts of matter" (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*).
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] "Beauty is inexplicable ; it is a hovering, floating, glittering shadow, whose outlines elude the grasp of definition" (Goethe).
[5] Visvanatha, *Sahitya Darpana*.

Similar views have been held at different times in Europe. For instance, Plotinus held : "That which sees must be kindred and similar to its object, before it can see it. The eye could never have beheld the Sun, had it not been Sunlike. The mind could never have perceived the beautiful, had it not first become beautiful itself. Everyone must partake of the Divine nature, before he can discern the Divinely beautiful."

Plato, dealing with the laws of beauty in the *Symposium*, says virtually the same thing : "He who would proceed aright in this matter should begin to visit beautiful forms. Soon he will perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another, and then if beauty of form is his general pursuit how foolish would he be not to recognise that beauty in every form is one and the same. And when he perceives this he will become a lover of all beautiful forms, and next he will consider that the beauty of the mind is more honourable than the beauty of things. . . . At length the vision will be revealed to him of a single science which is the science of beauty everywhere . . . a thing of wondrous beauty which is everlasting, not growing or decaying nor waxing nor waning . . . but beauty Absolute, Separate, Simple, and Ever-lasting, which without diminution and without increase is imparted to the evergrowing and perishing beauties of all other things. . . . He learns to use the beauties of earth as steps along which he mounts upwards ; going from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair notions, he arrives at the notion of Absolute Beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is . . . If man has ever eyes to see true beauty he becomes a friend of God and Immortal."

In the *Phaedrus* Plato declares Absolute Beauty to be "a super-sensuous, spiritual essence which is discerned by the mind when thrown into ecstasy."

Among the modern writers on aesthetics both Kant and Hegel would seem to echo a view identical with the Hindu : "The beautiful," says the former, "is that which gives pleasure universally without a concept" (a concept being for him a form imposed by the faculty of judgment upon sense-data, making such sense-data knowable). "The outward shape by which the content is made perceptible," declares the latter, "is merely for the sake of the mind and the spirit."

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PART THREE

PRINCIPLES OF ARTISTIC PRACTICE

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PRINCIPLES OF ARTISTIC PRACTICE

(1)

So far I have been concerned to bring out the aesthetic implications of the Hindu religio-philosophical idealism in its various moods and to present the central doctrine of that idealism in its disguise as the Hindu view of art proper. I come now to treat of the practical rules laid down in the *Silpa-shastras* (art-treatises) for the realisation of the supreme ideal of beauty which I have defined as the goal of Hindu art.

The way in which art seeks to realise this ideal is, of course, indirectly, that is to say in the service of religion. As religion is for the Hindus only a way of philosophy, art becomes for them simply a way of illustrating the central truth of religion and philosophy.

Three arts have in Indian history been thus the handmaids of religion: (1) architecture; (2) image-making; (3) painting. Around all these a vast body of early technical literature grew up. Research into this literature is still in its infancy. It is difficult to assign the individual authorship of the various *Slipa-shastras* (art-treatises), to fix the dates in which they were written, or to determine the exact character of many of the precepts contained in them.

Among the authors mentioned as responsible for these books are mythical and half-mythical sages. Some of their compositions are ascribed to hoary antiquity, while others belong to more recent times.

But if we refuse to concern ourselves overmuch with the lives of the various sages who put down these laws about practical aesthetics, and ignore the demands of a rigid chronology as a concession to the oriental historian's fancy, the art-treatises reveal three fairly comprehensive systems of laws as they have come down to us: (1) the laws of architecture; (2) the laws concerning images; (3) the laws about painting. Without going into the multifarious details of all these dictums I shall select here for consideration the main rules. For convenience of exposition I shall take first the rules concerning the making of images.

Before I actually treat of the canon, however, it will be well to note the character of the Indian craftsman according to the *Silpa-shastras*, and the nature of the *Yoga* method of contemplation, which, although the ordinary method of Hindu religious worship, was enjoined to be practised by all artisans, whether architects, image-makers, or image-makers, or painters, so that they might elaborate the mental vision of their work before they set out to perform the task of technical elaboration.

(2)

In the preliminary section of this book I have noted that the *Silpin, Sthapati, Karma-*

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kara, Rupa-kara, Chitra-kara, as the Indian artist was called, resembled the European manual worker, artisan, or craftsman generally. It may here be observed that he also differed from the average European manual-worker in certain fundamental respects. For, first of all, he often practised a variety of arts at once, an architect, for instance, being also a sculptor, bronze-founder, gold-, silver-, and copper smith. Then, unlike most European workers, he was not merely an executant ; and, unlike a modern architect, he was not solely a designer, but both designer and executant in one.

Another vital difference between the Indian and the European craftsman is determined by the former's place in society as a servant of the temple, and his attitude both towards his religion and to his work.

It is probable that in the early history of Indian art the priest himself was artist and brought the inspiration and the fecundation of the soul to the making of sacred objects. Later he seems to have relegated his function as artist to guilds of artisans and craftsmen who became attached to the temple and often lived in a colony near it in order to be in the vicinity of the shrine at which they worshipped, and in the service of which they carried out their professional duties.

The Indian craftsman was well versed in the subtleties of the higher religion of philosophy, and believing in a Supreme God brought his faith in a philosophically defined Divinity and his inheritance of myth to bear upon the sacred task of rendering explicit the implications of the Cosmic Life. In order to sustain his vocation on the secure foundations of religion and to give it an exalted place in the scheme of Hindu social life, he traced the descent of his caste from "Visvakarma; Lord of the Arts, master of a thousand handicrafts, carpenter of the gods, and builder of their palaces divine, fashioner of every jewel, first of craftsmen, by whose art men live, and whom, a great and deathless god, they continually worship."[1] The five sons of this god (who is only the Supreme God defined specifically to be honoured as the presiding deity of the artisans) are claimed to have been the first blacksmith, the first carpenter, the first founder, the first mason, the first goldsmith, variously, and the succeeding generations of craftsmen are supposed to be their progeny.

Like most other myths consciously invented to make abstruse philosophical theories interesting and easily intelligible to those for whom, as I have constantly said, it is much easier to love than to know, this myth has very far-reaching consequences. The Indian craftsmen, whether the most sophisticated priest-artists or simple manual workers, were enabled by this picturesque story to comprehend that since the Supreme God in the form of Visvakarma, the artist-craftsman of heaven, was the founder of the arts and bequeathed His knowledge to His first five human artisan-sons (the ancestors of all succeeding craftsmen), Divine skill had been preserved intact in their families and cast through the laws of heredity. And the fact that the Supreme God was generally understood not only to be the first practitioner of the crafts, but also the ideal practitioner, the ideal craftsman, crystallising Absolute Beauty, Absolute Rhythm, Absolute Proportion in Himself and in His work, supplied the artisans a

[1] *Mahabharata.*

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model to live up to, and raised the pursuit of their art above the eccentricity of particular individual and limited ideas of beauty to an acknowledged universal ideal of perfection which is philosophically and aesthetically one of the broadest and the most comprehensive view of order that the human mind in all countries and among all nations has been able to evolve and formulate when strained to its utmost resources. With all the simplicity of his faith the Indian artisan sought thus, through the Divine Visvakarma, to gain, if he could, one little glimpse of the inmost essence of all things, he strove to suggest some vaguest hints of Reality, so that he himself and yearning humanity might in some small way be helped to overcome the obstacles presented by their finitude in the way of the realisation of the Infinite.

Those who know how extraordinary is the effect of a deep consciousness on a man's art will not doubt that although the Indian craftsman was like any other citizen and not a peculiar person *qua* artist, he often cultivated vision and technique by accepting the myth of being inspired by god and raised his work from the static elements of his material to be the bearer of an ecstatic message—the vehicle of a prophecy. Because his vocation was hereditary (and what a noble heredity it must seem to a man who believes he is descended from God!), he inherited the collective unconscious of his race, and learnt the laws of the outer world so that he might be the better able to inscribe the potentialities of his spirit upon the walls of his age. Because he had a hereditary bent for and acquired exceptional skill in his work, he became a sort of celestial exile—an inspired master-builder who sought to intensify the faculties of his inheritance with the experience of the earth and the traditional laws of his craft, so that he might infuse the fire of Divine Omniscience into the tabernacle of the body.

The *Silpa-shastras* (art-treatises), which lay down the canon for his instruction in the technical task of evoking the vast hidden mystery of the universe in the objectivity of forms and images, made him thus an ordinary but an honest God-fearing man, who possessed a certain innate propensity for, and potential capacity to learn his craft, the cultivation of which religiously might eventually make him a master, and endow him with prophetic fingers: "The Silpin," it is declared in one of these treatises, "should understand the *Atharva-Veda*, the thirty-two *Silpa-shastras*, and the Vedic *mantras* (hymns) by which the deities are invoked. He should be one who wears a sacred thread, a necklace of holy beads and a ring of Kusa grass on his finger; delighting in the worship of God, faithful to his wife, avoiding strange women, piously acquiring a knowledge of the various sciences, such a one is, indeed, a craftsman."[1] In another place it is said that the painter must be "no sluggard, not given to anger, holy, learned, self-controlled, devout, and charitable; such should be his character."[2]

[1] "A Tamil Silpa-shastra," translated by Kearns, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876.

[2] Grunwedel, *Mythologie des Buddhismus*, p. 192.

A similar spirit and attitude to his work was recommended to and adopted by the mediaeval Christian artist. "The artist is subject, in the sphere of his art, to a kind of asceticism, which may require heroic sacrifices. He must be fundamentally in the direct line as regards the end of his art, forever on his guard not only against the vulgar attractions of easy execution and success, and against the slightest relaxation of his interior effort, for habits diminish, if unexercised and ever so

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The spirituality of the Indian artist, of which I have been speaking, must not, however, lead the reader into neglecting what has been the great contribution of Sir William Rothenstein who made clear to students of Indian art—the Indian artist's skill. Nowhere is it more true than in India that art is both content and form, conception and execution. If the Indian artists were essentially the bearers of a message, a prophecy, they were also essentially the skilful bearers of that message or prophecy. If it was the religiosity of their mental outlook that enabled them to conceive the Reality behind appearance, it was also their intimate knowledge of appearance which helped them to translate that Reality into form. That this fact was emphatically recognised is clear from the following remark which the Hindus (so fond of claiming Divine authority for everything) put into the mouth of Mahadeva (Siva) in his discourse with Parvati (Sakti) : " All is fruitless, the repeating of *mantras* (prayers), and the telling of beads, austerities and devotion, unless one has gained the knowledge of the *Varnas* (colours)—the true significance of lettering, the lustre and the virtue of figures."[1] Another Hindu text lays down that "one who knows amiss his craft... after his death will fall into hell and suffer."[2] If an artist has the vision and not the technique, then, according to the Hindus, he is as unfortunate as a skilled workman without vision.

Since the conscious function of the Indian artisans attached to the temples (at least so far as painting and sculpture are concerned) was the portrayal of the Divinity, of a Divinity who is philosophically Super-sensuous, Infinite, Unconditioned, and Absolute, difficulties were sure to rise in the technical task of representing Him. These difficulties were solved, as I have previously hinted, by the elaboration through *Yoga*

much more by any careless exercise not proportionate to their intensity. The artist must suffer sleepless nights, purify himself without ceasing, voluntarily abandon fertile places for barren places, full of insecurity. In a certain sphere and from a particular point of view, in the sphere of making and from the point of view of the good of the work, he must be humble and magnanimous, prudent, upright, strong, temperate, simple, pure, ingenuous. All these virtues which the saints possess *simpliciter*, purely and simply, and in the line of the Sovereign Good, must inform the artist *secundum quid*, in a certain relation, in a line apart, extra-human if not inhuman. So he easily assumes the tone of a moralist when speaking or writing about his art, and he is well aware that he has a virtue to preserve. 'We shelter an angel whom we never cease to offend. We ought to be the guardians of that angel. Shelter your virtue carefully....' " (Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism.*)

"David, the most excellent of prophets . . . collecting himself with all the attention of his mind to the love of his creator, uttered this saying among others : 'Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house.' And albeit a man of so deep an understanding called this house the habitation of the court of heaven, wherein God presideth over the hymning choirs of angels in glory that cannot be told . . . yet it is certain that he desired the adornment of the material house of God, which is the house of prayer . . . wherefore most beloved son, make thou no long delay, but believe in full faith that the spirit of God hath filled thine heart when thou hast adorned His house with so great beauty and such great comeliness....Work, therefore, now, good man, happy in this life before God's face and man's, and happier still in the life to come, by whose labour and zeal so many burnt offerings are devoted to God ! Kindle thyself to a still ampler art, and set thyself with all the might of thy soul to complete that which is yet lacking in the gear of the Lord's house, without which the Divine mysteries and ministries of God's service may not stand ; such as chalices, candelabra, thuribles, chrism-vases, crewets, shrines for holy relics, crosses, missals, and suchlike, which the necessary use of the ecclesiastical order requireth. Which if thou wouldst fashion, begin after the manner following." Prologue to a treatise on painting, enamelling, metal-working, and other crafts written by a monk named Theophilus, eleventh or twelfth century (Coulton, *Mediaeval Garner*, p. 166. See also Laurie, *Materials of the Painter's Craft*).

Reference may here be made to the profound saying, *labore est orare*, and Carlyle's comment on it : "I find that a man cannot make a pair of shoes rightly unless he does it in a devout manner ; no man is ever paid for his real work or should ever expect to be paid. All work properly so-called is an appeal from the seen to the Unseen—a devout calling on the Higher powers ; and unless they stand by us, it will not be a work, but be a quackery."

[1] *Bharata-natya-shastra.* [2] *Mayamatya.*

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(contemplation) of dhyana mantras or mental conceptions after the Supreme Being in His various aspects and manifestations.

How exactly was *Yoga* used in art to elaborate these mental conceptions of the Supreme Being? I have already partly suggested the answer to this question by urging that since art, especially that of sculpture and painting, is concerned to make images of God to serve the ends of religious worship, and *Yoga*-contemplation is primarily an act of religious worship, art employs *Yoga*-contemplation to elaborate mental conceptions of God more or less as they are used in religious worship.

I have referred to the place of *Yoga*-contemplation in the scheme of Hindu religious ritual, and here I shall recapitulate both the principle and the process of that ritual in order to give a more coherent view of the highly important practice of *Yoga* by Hindu artists.

We have seen that the fundamental postulate of Hindu religion and philosophy is that Reality or God is an infinite unconditioned state of Being, always One and at peace, and that the world is a continual process of becoming or change, the moving thing, conditioned by the relativity of space, time, matter, and motion. God or Being is Perfect Experience, the world or becoming is incomplete or relative, dualistic experience. The method of reaching God or Perfect Experience is through the exercise of *Yoga*-worship.

The necessity of this method is explained by the fact that the desire of man to attain God is obstructed by the sheaths or veils which God or the Higher Self of man has put on Itself during the process of its manifestation or creation in the universe. There are three such sheaths which enshroud humanity in the darkness of limitations: (1) the sheath of matter and sensual pleasure ; (2) the sheath of energy with its lure of activity ; (3) the sheath of mentality with its pride of rational thought. It is only when man penetrates these three sheaths and rises to the fourth sheath of intuition that he is emancipated from the world, and attains the sheath of Joy, Pure Bliss, God.

In the history of man's spiritual life, the first two sheaths are often easily torn, but the sheath of mentality with its pride of reason is made of rather thicker skin. In apprehending things the mind takes the forms of the objects it apprehends, that is to say, it acquires the habits of its environment, becomes familiar with its new surroundings, thus adding on to its originally pure and real self more and more layers of illusory experience. Yet by " constant labour and passionlessness it may be held in check. " This is to be secured through *Yoga*-contemplation, which is a way, as Patanjali, the great Hindu philosopher, called it, of the " repression of the (lower) activities of the understanding." For thus the mind can be attuned by introspective analysis of formal aspects, to realise its essential form, i.e. to rise from the limitations of illusory experience which it has created to a realisation of its Higher Self, God.

Now since it is by meditating on the intellectual self that one realises the Higher Self, God, the Hindus recommend emotional prayer or concentration and other ritual, to effect the exaltation of the worshipper boarding towards, the Transcendental Self or Godhead. But Transcendental Experience is Infinite and Unconditioned and " fickle is the mind (of man), forward, forceful, and stiff—as hard to check as is the wind." Hence, to accommodate the Infinite to the capacity of finite minds, it is

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enjoined to worship God through the contemplation of its comprehensible aspects, such as Vishnu, the blessed one, Siva the symbol of Cosmic Rhythm, Krishna dancing with the *gopis* (maids) signifying the relation of God, the Universal Soul, to the human souls.

Mental and physical representations of these are thus invented as symbols to serve as *via media* for concentration on the abstract Universal Soul or God. These symbols are called *Pratima* or *Pratika*. According as physical or mental symbols are worshipped, the worship is called " gross " or " subtle, " the term " gross " being used not in a deprecatory but in a descriptive sense and the only difference between the two modes of worship being that in the " gross " worship no call is made on the imagination, an image of three dimensions being worshipped by physical acts such as bodily prostrations and offerings of real flowers, etc., subtle worship being conducted through imaginary conceptions of the Deity given in the *dhyana-mantras* (mental conceptions) of God in the Hindu holy books.

It is, then, with the necessity that the human beings find to accommodate the Infinite Soul to the capacity of their finite minds that religion chiefly requires the services of the arts of sculpture and painting, for images must be used for the convenience of the worshipper.

As we have seen early in the Vedic Age, this elaborate psychology of religious ritual was understood and philosophical symbols were invented to be used in worship. The first symbols worshipped in India were very simple. A stone or golden egg symbolised the first germ or the egg of the universe. It was placed under a tree which, with its outstretched branches, represented the All-embracing Cosmic Spirit in the universe, and an image of a snake carved on stone was placed near the egg to signify the incarnation and reincarnation of the human soul, the passage of which was supposed to be as "curvacious" as the body of a snake.

In the Epic Age the *dhyana-mantras* (mental pictures of God in His various aspects) given in the Vedic hymns and elsewhere began to be translated into concrete shapes and forms, and with these before them the worshippers practised contemplation to attain *Yoga* (union) with God.

When the artist had to translate these *dhyana-mantras* (mental conceptions) into forms for the purpose of worship in the temple, it was found convenient by the lawgivers of art to enjoin on him the same process of "subtle" or "gross" *Yoga*-worship which was enjoined on the ordinary worshipper, so that he could perfectly visualise the particular aspect of the Supreme Being which he was concerned to represent before he actually set out to make an image of Him.

The general nature of the method used by practising artists was the same both in literature and in art. We have seen how the *Yoga* method was used by Valmiki, the author of the *Ramayana*, when "seating himself with his face towards the East, and sipping water according to the rule (of Hindu religious ritual), he set himself to contemplation of his theme. By virtue of his *Yoga*-power he clearly saw before himself, Rama, Lakshamana and Sita, and Dasaratha, together with his wives, in his kingdom, laughing, talking, acting and moving as if in real life . . . by *Yoga*-power that righteous one beheld all that had come to pass and all that was to come to pass in the future, like a nelli fruit (*phyllanthus emblica*, denoting clear insight) on the palm of his

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hand. And having truly seen all by virtue of his concentration, the generous sage began the setting forth of the history of Rama."

We have a glimpse of the actual process of *Yoga* (contemplation), as employed by artist, in a Buddhist *Tantra* of about the twelfth century A.D. from which M. Foucher has culled the following account summarised by Dr. Coomaraswamy: "The artist is enjoined to proceed to a solitary place after purificatory ablutions and wearing newly washed garments. There he is to perform the sevenfold office, beginning with the invocation of the hosts of the Buddhas and Boddhistavas in an open space before him, and the offerings of the real or imaginary flowers, and ending with a dedication of the merit acquired to the welfare of all beings. Then he has to realise in thought the four infinite qualities (love, compassion, sympathy, same-sightedness). Then he must meditate on the original purity of the first principle of things, and on what comes to the same thing, their emptiness or absolute non-existence. By the fire of the idea of emptiness there are destroyed beyond discovery the five elements which compose the individual consciousness. Only when the personality of the individual is thus set aside is he able to invoke the Deity, which last condition is strictly enjoined. For complete comprehension is only possible when the consciousness is thus identified with an object of cognition. All this takes place in the imagination. The Divinity appears 'like a reflection,' or 'as in a dream.' Very rarely, indeed, is any drawing made use of, even in the most complicated conceptions, where the principal personage to be represented is surrounded in the centre of a *mandala* (shrine). It is only when the mental image is thus defined that the artist begins to mould or paint."

The essentials of the *Yoga* method from the artist's point of view, when shorn of the unnecessary details with which they are connected by the author of the *Tantra*, are : (1) self-purification by an artist in order more easily to set aside the sheaths of the lower self ; (2) the identification of the artist with the mental picture of the God, the Higher Self, that being the concept he has in mind to execute ; (3) the definition of this mental conception vividly.

The actual making of an image by the Hindu artist would involve some such process as this : The artist performs purificatory ablutions and sits down to focus his attention on such a *dhyana-mantra* (mental picture) of the Supreme Being as signifies His Cosmic Rhythm in the Dance of Siva, myth, reacting the while:

> The dancing foot, the sound of tinkling bells,
> The songs that are sung, and the various steps,
> The forms assumed by the Lord as he dances,
> Discover these in your hearts, so shall your bonds be broken.

He then offers flowers, incense and other gifts to the form conceived. The mental picture is thus seen in all its details and the work of art is more complete in the mind before being translated into form. The artist then begins the task of technical elaboration, during which time he must hold fast to the conception evolved through *Yoga* (contemplation), and strain every nerve to translate it perfectly into form.

The kind of mental state designed to be secured through the practice of *Yoga*

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can also be cultivated by the artisan through tuning up the functions of the body and the mind into a perfect obedience to the faculty of intuition and through the deliberate invocation of dreams or reveries. The relaxation of the body and mind helps to evoke the intuitive faculty, while "dwelling on the knowledge that presents itself in dream or sleep" is recommended by Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga* system, as a means of realising the vision desired. And, as we have seen, in the *Agni-purana*, the imager is advised, on the night previous to starting work, to perform purificatory ablutions, and on going to bed to pray:

O thou Lord of all gods, teach me in dreams how to carry out all the work I have in mind in the morning.

(3)

FOR "the successful achievement of this *Yoga* (vision in concrete shapes and images) the lineaments of images are described in books (*Silpa-shastras*) to be dwelt on in details."[2] These the artist must observe, for "though it is the devotion of the devotee that causes the manifestation of the image of the Blessed One (God) in this matter of iconography, the procedure of the ancient sages should be followed."[3] The Hindu ideal of technical beauty is of a "beauty of type, impersonal and aloof,"[4] "not an ideal of varied individual beauty, but of formalised and rhythmic."[5] Hence "only an image made in accordance to the canon can be called beautiful; some may think that beau-

[1] For a fuller discussion of the application of *Yoga* to art, see Zimmer's *Kunstform und Yoga im Indischen Kultbild*.

That the principle involved in the processes described above is not peculiar to the Hindus alone but has prevailed elsewhere, too, may be obvious if I refer to some European authorities.

The ecstatic trances of mediaeval Christian artists seem to me to have been nothing if not uncontrolled *Yoga*. Of the main element of *Yoga*-worship, i.e. the concentration by the artist upon God in prayer before setting about his work, there are numerous analogies in mediaeval literature. I take a typical instance from Peter Calo, *Vita Sancti Thomae Aquinatus*: "After the death of the Doctor, Brother Reginald, having returned to Naples and resumed his lectures, exclaimed with many tears: 'My brothers, while he was still in life, my master forbade me to disclose the admirable thing concerning him whereof I had been witness. One of those things was that he had acquired his science not only by human industry, but by the merit of prayer, for whenever he wished to study, discuss, read, write, or dictate, he first had recourse to prayer in private, and poured forth his soul in tears in order to discover the Divine secret, and by the merit of this prayer his doubts were removed and he issued therefrom fully instructed.' "

M. Jacques Maritain confirms the similarity of attitude disclosed by the above passage to what I have said of the Hindu view: "The work of art has been kneaded and prepared, formed, brooded over, and matured in a mind before emerging into matter" (*Art and Scholasticism*, p. 7).

Most contemporary artists would if interrogated about their methods of work disclose that they unconsciously employ the method of *Yoga* (contemplation) themselves. The testimony that such a modern artist as Rodin used to hold seances to realise his work mentally before he began to mould his statues is significant. And the general modern European aesthetics as represented by Croce points to the same truth: "The true artist never makes a stroke with his brush without having previously seen it with his imagination."

The researches of psycho-analysis in regard to the problem of artistic creation bear out the same theory. For instance, Dr. Jung, in his *Psychology of the Unconscious*, describes the one-pointedness of mental concentration as a preliminary to undertaking a work of art "as the willed introversion of a creative mind, which, retreating before its own problem and inwardly collecting its own forces, dips at least for a moment into the sources of life, in order there to wrest a little more strength from the mother before the completion of its work."

The Hindus, of course, had reduced the principles of *Yoga* to such exhaustive codes as are contained in Patanjali's *Sutras* and the *Tantra*, and they had defined and regulated its practice to everyday formulas by which the *yogin* state could be deliberately invoked.

[2] *Sukraniti*.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Coomaraswamy, *The Aims of Indian Art*.
[5] *Ibid*.

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tiful which corresponds to their fancy, but that not in accordance with the canon is unlovely to the discerning eye."[1]

A question arises here as to the nature and the scope of the canonical rules laid down in the art-treatises, as it has been asserted that they enslave the artist and debase his art into an empty conventionality.

It seems to me that the objection to the canon is irrelevant and futile. For the rules laid down in the *Silpa-shastras* are to art what algebraic formulas are to the solution of a mathematical problem, or the rules of grammar to the building up of a good style. They were remembered by artisans in the form of mnemonic verses during apprenticeship, as the rules of geometry and algebraic formulas are remembered by students of engineering in European colleges, and were mainly considerations of measurement, form, and design, etc., pertaining to the symbolical expression of philosophical truth. An established symbology was necessary to guard against the danger of inferior craftsmen perverting the look of sacred objects by giving shape to unholy eccentricities and idiosyncracies. This was secured by injunctions which took the form of declaring, for example, that such-and-such an image must have three heads if it is to signify the conception it is meant to signify. No doubt the exact size, the shape, the contour, and other details of the three heads were also laid down. But whether the artisan succeeded in turning out a three-headed figure which was a work of beauty was no more in the power of the Shastras to determine than it is in the power of the laws of grammar to produce a perfect piece of prose, or the rules of surgery to bring about a successful operation.

It has also been urged against the canon that it produces sameness in the work produced according to it. An answer to that may be found in the fact that no two works of Indian art, both of which may have been produced in obedience to the same canon, are ever seen to be like each other.

That the contingency of a prophetic artist inventing new rules to suit his own purposes was adequately recognised by the Hindus is evident from the following passage of Sukracharya, the author of the *Silpa-shastra Sukraniti*, in which he addresses the spirit of beauty : "These Lakshami are not for thee ; these laws that I lay down, these analyses of what an image should be, are for those images that are made to order for people who would worship them. Endless are thy forms ! No Shastra can define thee ! Nothing can appraise thee."[2]

[1] Coomaraswamy, *The Aims of Indian Art.*

[2] The interpretation of the mediaeval canon given by M. Jacques Maritain in his *Art and Scholasticism* may supplement the view which I have briefly put forward : "The ascertained rules of the Scholastic philosophy are not conventional imperatives imposed on art from without, but the highly concealed ways by which art itself, the working reason, goes to work." "The name technique may be given to the whole collection of these rules ; but on condition of amplifying considerably and elevating the ordinary meaning of the word technique. For it is a question not of material processes only, but also and chiefly of the ways and means of proceeding in the intellectual sphere which the artist uses to attain the end of his art. Such ways are determined like paths laid out before through a tangled thicket. But they have to be discovered. And the most elevated of them, those closely approximating to the individuality of the work spiritually conceived by the artist, are strictly personal to him and discoverable by one individual only." "Every artist is well aware that if the intellectual form ceases to determine his matter, his art would be a mere sensual confusion." Maritain further calls in the evidence of Baudelaire to illustrate the point : "It is clear that systems of rhetoric and prosodies are not forms of tyranny arbitrarily devised, but a collection of rules required by the very organisation of the spiritual being : prosodies and systems of rhetoric

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To come to the canon about the making of images, it may be noted that they are scattered about in different *Silpa-shastras*, written in different parts of India. Six *Silpa-shastras*, the *Brihatsamhita*, the *Sukra-niti-sara*, the *Vishnudharmottaram*, the *Matsya-puranam*, the *Agni-puranam*, the *Mayasastram*, the *Pratima-manalakshanam*, lay down, however, more or less comprehensive systems. While I shall have generally all these in mind, I propose to note the measurements laid down in the *Sukraniti* as representative.

"Images are made of sand, paste, enamel, earth, stones, woods, and metals."[1] A consideration that might determine the choice of one material in preference to another is what age it is manufactured in. "Images are to be made of gold, silver, copper, bronze, in the *Satya*, *Treta*, *Dvapura*, and *Kaliyuga* respectively."[2] When the material used is stone, the artist should construct images of white, yellow, red, and black stones according to the ages, but may also exercise his own "option." To the various materials are ascribed certain auspicious qualities for reasons that were perhaps purely local. "An image of wood and of earth gives long life, prosperity, strength, and victory; one cut out of a jewel brings luck, a golden image brings nourishment, a silver one fame, that of copper increases population, one of stone augurs increase in land."[3]

The *Sukraniti* recognises three different kinds of images, *Sattvika*, *Rajasika*, *Tamasika*, corresponding to the three ultimate qualities of reality, *Sattva* (truth), *Rajas* (passion), *Tamas* (gloom). As the possession of these three qualities determines the character of all things, men and gods (the *sattvaguna* symbolising calm, clear vision and goodness, the *rajas guna* implying an impure state, attached to desire and immersed in sensational activity, and the *tamas guna* implying inertia, ignorance, and futility), so Sukracharya regards the possession of them by the gods as an appropriate criterion for the classification of their images. "An image of God seated self-contained, in the posture of a *Yogi*, with hands turned as if granting boons and encouragement to his worshippers, surrounded by praying and worshipping Indra and other gods is called a *Sattvik* image." "An image seated on a *vahana* (vehicle) decked with various ornaments, with hands holding weapons, as well as granting boons and encouragement, is called a *Rajasik* image." "A *Tamasik* image is a terrible armed figure fighting and destroying the demons."[4]

Another classification of images is: *Nara* (man-god); *Krura* (terrible); *Asura* (demoniac); *Bala* (infant); and *Kumara* (juvenile).

Corresponding to all these types there are different ideal scales and proportions in terms of the human body. They are expressly designed for the creation of superhuman types, because, in a terminology that would have shocked the Greeks and would perhaps shock most admirers of the Greek ideal of God conceived in the image of man, as says Sukracharya, "even the misshapen image of a god is to be preferred to that of a

have never prevented originality from manifesting itself distinctly. The opposite would be far more true, that they have assisted the development of originality." With the habit or virtue of art exalting his spirit from within, the artist is a master making use of the rules to serve his ends; it is foolish to conceive him as the slave of his tools. Properly speaking he possesses and is not possessed by them: he is not held by them, it is he who holds, through them, matter and reality.

reality.

[1] *Sukraniti.*

[2] *Brihatsamhita.*

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Sukraniti.*

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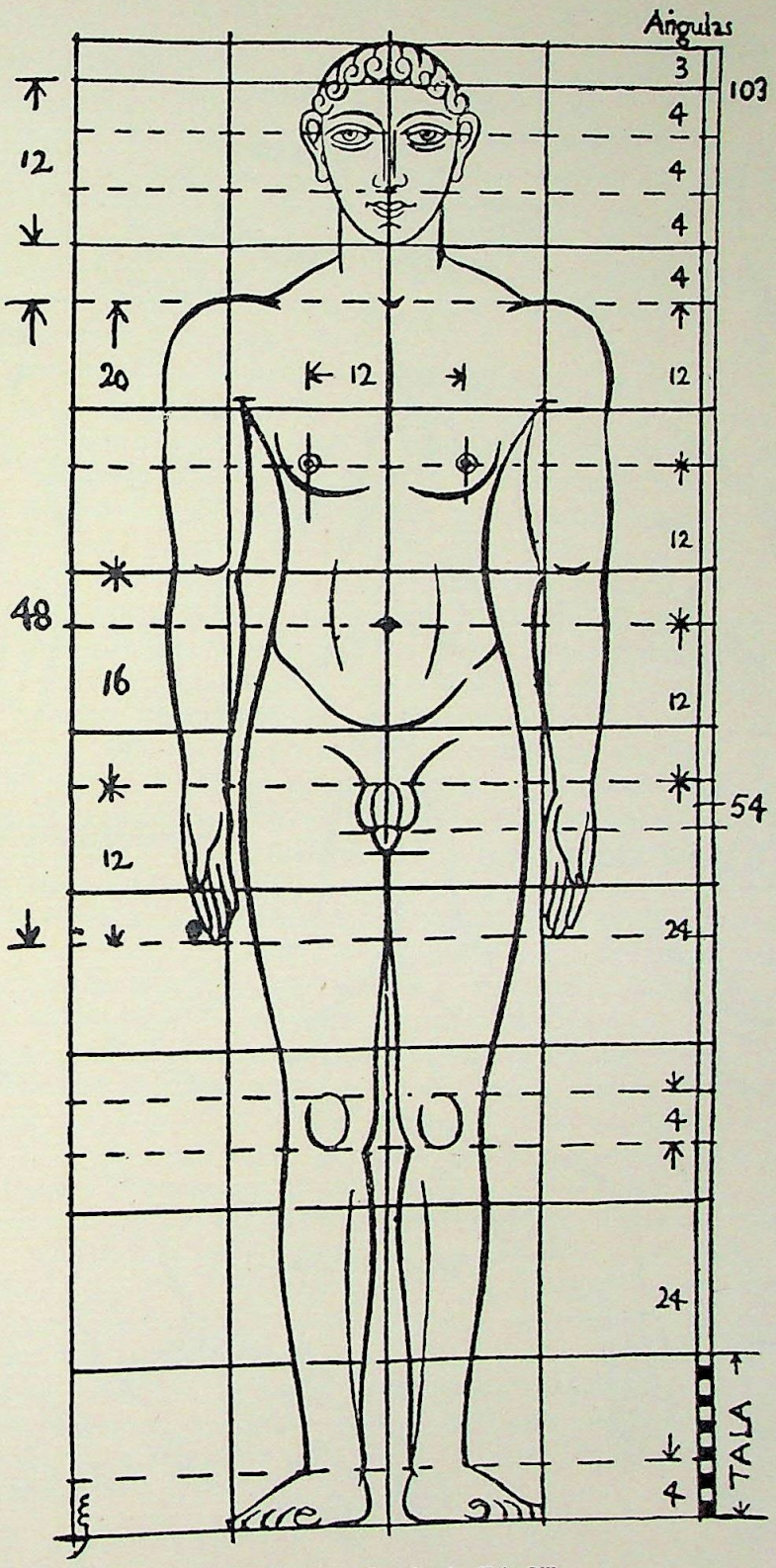

NAVA TALAM—Drawing by Eric Gill

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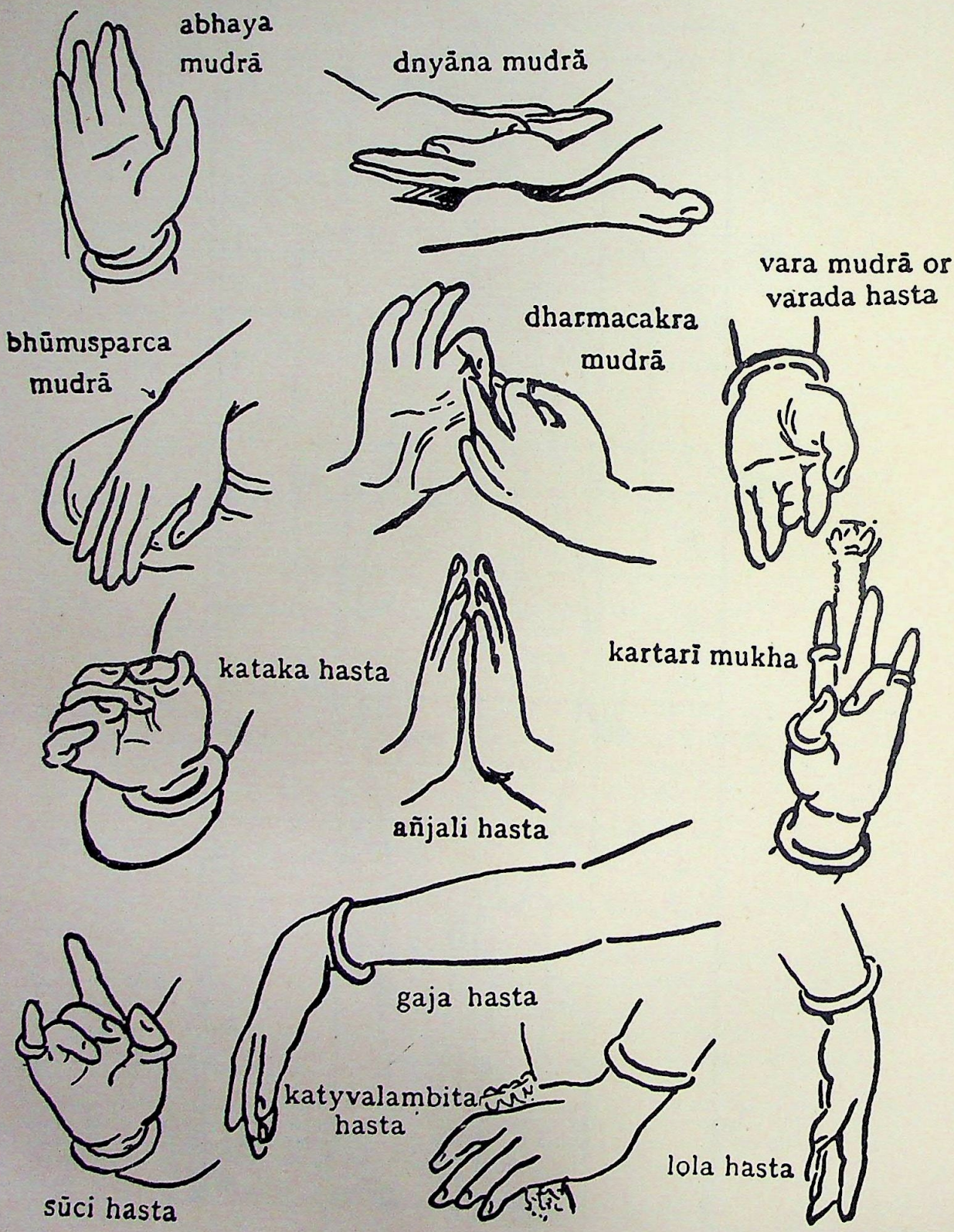

MUDRAS

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man, however attractive the latter may be," for "perchance one (man) in a million has perfect form, perfect beauty."[1]

The basic unit is technically styled a *tala* (the measure of the face from the hair on the forehead to the chin). The *tala* is further divided into the following units: one *tala*=twelve *angulas*; one *angula* (or the fourth of the closed fist of a hand)= eight *yabas*; one *yaba* (or a grain of barley corn)=eight *yukas*; one *yuka*=eight *likhyas*; one *likhya*=eight *romagaras*; one *romagara* (the top of a hair)=eight *renus*; one *renu* (ray of the sun)=eight *anus*, an *anus*, being the lowest unit, meaning the ray of the sun stealing through a crevice.

The *Sukraniti* enjoins that the measures appropriate to the various kinds of images should vary with the age during which they are made. For instance, in the *Satyayuga* they are to be ten *talas*; in the *Tretayuga* nine *talas*; in the *Dvapurayuga* eight *talas*; in the *Kaliyuga* seven *talas*. But this prescription is followed neither by the other *Silpa-shastras* nor by the craftsmen. The measure usually adopted was the *nava-tala*, or it varied according to the second of the above-mentioned classifications of images, i.e. *Nara-murti*=ten *talas*; *Krura-murti*=twelve *talas*; *Asura-murti*=sixteen *talas*; *Bala-murti*=five *talas*; *Kumara-murti*=six *talas*. The average human being, from whose norm the superhuman type was deduced, was understood to be *asta-tala*, or eight *talas*, but the most beautiful man is said to be nine *talas*, and the man below the average is computed at seven *talas*. The average female figure is also seven *talas*.

According as different images are made to express particular ideals, they are endowed with certain *asanas*, poses and attitudes: (1) *Sambhanga*, equally bent or at equipoise, is the pose prescribed for *sattvik* images, i.e. images which are seated or standing in an attitude of spiritual serenity or poise. (2) *Abhanga*, a slightly bent pose, is assigned to figures standing in meditative repose, often with the weight on one leg. (3) *Ati-bhanga*, a greatly bent attitude, interpreting violent motion or dramatic action, like a tree caught in a storm, is exemplified in South Indian images of Siva as Nataraja, and in the figures of other violent or destructive gods and goddesses. (4) *Tri-bhanga* is an extremely bent stance, similar to *Ati-bhanga*.

Besides the stances and sways of the body which are suggested as the vehicles of spiritual moods and ecstatic raptures, there are certain *mudras*, conventions to interpret the finger plays enjoined in the Shastras. These movements, originally suggested in the *Bharata-natya-shastra*, have gone through a process of modification at the hands of artisans and craftsmen all over India. I enumerate here only the most prominent conventions and the leadings motifs: (1) The *Kataka-hasta* signifies communication. (2) The *Lola-hasta*, often styled *Lamba-hasta* or *Gaja-hasta*, is "the hand hanging down." (3) The *Tripataka* is the "three-fingered" movement of hands carrying weapons (*ayudhas*), such as an axe (*tanka*) or deer (*Krishna mriga*), etc. (4) The *Varda* and the *Abhaya-hasta* symbolise the "gesture of gifts" and "assurance." (5) The *Nidrita-hasta*, the "sleeping hand," signifies "inaction." (6) The *Damaru-hasta* is the hand carrying the drum. (7) The *Ardha-chandra-hasta*, the hand unfolding itself like a crescent, represents the carrying of fire. (8) The *Anjali-hasta* is "the joint palm of devotion."

[1] *Sukraniti.*

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The spiritual qualities of images are further suggested by a refined symbolism of ornaments. Ornaments in India are ordinarily made on the analogy of flowers and fruits, not, however, as flowers and fruit are in nature, but as they have left their impress in the memory of the artisan in love with the beauty of nature, or as they have haunted his imagination and been woven by him into fanciful garlands. The names given to some of the articles of Indian jewellery are significant of their prototypes; for instance, "rui flower thread," "coco-nut flower garland," "petal garland," "string of millet flower," "ear flowers," "hair flower."

Some of the ornaments employed in South Indian bronzes have been enumerated by Mr. O. C. Gangoly. First may be mentioned the *Kati-bhanda* ("the waistband which is used for fastening the garment, which has a buckle shaped like a dragon-head with festoons hanging down"). It is technically called *arunon-malai*, the festoons hanging down the thigh being styled *urumalai*. A similar festoon, which usually hangs from the elaborate ear ornaments, is styled *bahumalai*. The jewel band on the chest is called *ratna-kodhara-bandham*. The headgear generally known as *mukata* is of many kinds: *kiritam*, usually occurring in Vaishnavite images; *karanda* on the heads of female gods; *jata-muktam* adorns the head of Siva; while the *jata-bhandam*, coiffure, is assigned to Chandikeshwara and other saints. The *prava-torana*, or *prava-mandala*, is the "halo," "the gateway of radiance," and was originally used for the ring of fire in which Siva is represented as dancing his perennial dance.

There are certain delicately conceived similes and metaphors which the artist should have in mind when infusing form and character into his creations. These are mostly drawn from animal or vegetable forms, and not from human forms, because the Hindus believe that there is a superior uniformity and grace of form in the animal and vegetable worlds than among human beings, for, as I have shown in quotations, according to the Hindu attitude "perchance one (man) in a million has perfect form, perfect beauty."[1] It may be interesting to note some of the conventions suggested by a modern Indian artist, Mr. Abanindra Nath Tagore, who seemed to have understood all that is finest in the traditional art of Hindustan and to have tried to infuse the old ideas into the exigencies of contemporary conditions.[2]

The form of the face is said to be "rounded like a hen's egg." There may, of course, be other forms, for example, the betel leaf face, the moon face, the owl face, but all these are variations of the egg-shaped face. The forehead is compared to a bow. The eyebrows are said to be "like the leaves of a neem tree or like bows," but they are not supposed to be fixed like their prototypes, being rather like a leaf disturbed by the wind, or like a bow in different degrees of tension, according as they express different emotions. The eyes, generally styled fish-shaped, are compared to deers' eyes, to the lotus lily, the lotus leaf, or to the little safari-fish, according as they express playful gaiety, innocent simplicity, calm repose, serene peacefulness, and restless movement. The ears must be "like the letter ढ. The nose and the nostrils must be like the sesame flower, or like the seed of a long bean. The lips are likened

[1] *Sukranitī.*

[2] *Some Notes on Indian Artistic Anatomy.*

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to the *bimba* fruit, and the *bhanduti* flower. The chin is analogous to the mango stone. The neck is modelled on the conch shell, a truly poetic simile, because the conch is used all over India for calling the worshippers to prayers in the temples. The trunk from the lower part of the head is compared to the head of a cow, apparently to suggest the power of the chest, and the slimness of the waist and the looseness of the skin folding below. This part of the body has also been described as resembling the *damaru* (the hour-glass form), and the lion's body. The chest has been compared to a fastened door. The waist was always described in literature as slender like a wasp's. The shoulders are likened to an elephant's head. The forearms from the elbows to the base of the palms take their form from the trunk of a young plantain tree. Fingers should be modelled on beans or peapods. As the forearms, the thighs, too, are compared to the plantain tree, or the trunk of a young elephant. The knee-cap is likened to the skull of a crab. The shins are said to be like a fish full of roe. The hands and the feet have always been likened to a lotus.

"The characteristics of images are determined," says Sukracharya, "by the relation that subsists between the adorer and the adored." So that a ceremony of invocation is necessary if the image is to be considered a proper idol for worship. And if it is not for permanent use as an idol, it should be desecrated by *visajra* (a formula of dismissal). Images not meant for worship may, as has already been said, be designed to suit the artist's fancy, and images of clay made to serve as toys need not conform to the canon.

(4)

"THE earliest exhaustive account of the theory of painting "[1] is given in some chapters of the *Vishnudharmottaram*, "compiled in the seventh century A.D.," though the earliest account of the subject was given in the *Chitralaksana*, a "compilation of undoubtedly ancient date, and showing indications of being based on pre-Buddhist traditions."[2]

The origin of this art is described in the characteristic Indian historian's manner of connecting everything with God. Narayana, the Supreme Being, was engaged in meditation when the celestial dancing girls (*apsaras*) tried to disturb him with a display of coquetry and blandishments. The God conceived of a plan to cure the maidens of their vanity. He extracted the juice of a mango tree, and using that as his paint, he drew an imaginary picture portrait of a nymph, large eyed and delicate, with a form so filled with grace that no goddess, nor woman, could vie with her in the three worlds. The *apsaras* were put to shame when they saw Urvasi, the painted maiden, and crept silently away from God's presence, and the picture, into which Divine skill had infused the golden breath of life, became the ideal type of feminine beauty. Visvakarma, the architect of heaven, was then instructed in the art and science of painting, so that he might transmit his knowledge to the peoples of the earth.

In the *Chitralaksana* it is said that Brahma, the greatest of the gods, ordered a king to paint the portrait of a Brahmin's dead son, in order that he might put life

[1] *Visnudharmottaram*, edited by Stella Kramrisch.

[2] Percy Brown, *Indian Painting*.

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into the boy, and restore him to his bereaved father, and that it was the first painting ever executed.

The *Dwarka-lila* has it that a princess dreamed of a beautiful youth every night and became so enamoured of the object of her vision that she asked one of her maids of honour, a lady called Chitralekha, to transcribe the youth of her dream on paper. The maiden drew many portraits of gods and men and ultimately succeeded in painting a dream youth, who was identified as the grandson of the god Krishna.

The garb of these mythological stories only exposes, as I have said, in a picturesque manner the Hindu desire to sustain their arts and crafts on the firm basis of their Cosmic idealism. They consciously strove to find reasons "so that (to use the words of Vajra in the *Vishnudharmottaram*) the Deity may remain always close by, and may have an appearance according to the Shastras (holy books)."

The *Chitralaksana* views art as the finite answer to the urge of the Infinite and suggests that the "first use of painting in India was made in the colouring and embellishment of symbols and the images of gods employed in sacrificial ceremonies." It gives detailed rules setting out the proportions for the drawing of figures from gods and kings to normal men. The last are assigned a lesser height than the second, and the second lesser than the first. "The standard face," it is enjoined, "should be quadrangular, sharply outlined, beautifully finished with shining and splendid attributes. It should not be made triangular or crooked, nor should it be made oval or round. Whoever has painted it will constantly possess blessings. For ordinary men a face longing after peace, lengthy, round, or triangular, etc., may be used." "The hair of the head of a lord of men or of gods should be fine and curly, coloured a heavenly blue." Women may, it is said, be drawn always in an upright posture.

There is confirmation in the *Chitralaksana* of the use of *Yoga* method in painting, in a way similar to that in which it was employed in image-making and the other arts. It seems that this treatise must have provided the materials for the elaborations of later codes of painting such as those developed in the *Kamasutra* of Vatsayana, and the one hundred and fifty-three other works enumerated on the topic, of which the *Bhut-chitrakala-shastra*, the *Sakti-chitrakala-shastra*, the *Loha-chitrakala-shastra*, and the *Chayya-chitrakala-shastra*, etc., are the chief. It would be impossible to compress all the rules set forth in this literature here. But an exposition of Vatsayana's *Sadanga*, or the six laws of painting, may be undertaken to illustrate the nature of these systems.[1]

Rupa-bheda, Pramnani, Bhava, Lavanya-yojanam, Sadrisyam, Varnika-bhanga, these are the six essential requisites of painting.

So runs the Sanskrit couplet in a commentary on Vatsayana's *Kamasutra*, written by Yasodhara.[2]

[1] Compare the Chinese six laws of painting which seem to have been derived from Hindu tradition, but reinterpreted to suit Chinese exigencies. Tagore, *Sadanga*; Giles, *Introduction to the History of Chinese Pictorial Art*; Petrucci, *La Philosophie de la Nature dans l'Art de l'Extreme-Orient*; Binyon, *The Flight of the Dragon*.
[2] Reference also to the eight limbs of painting given in *Samarariganasutradhāra*.

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I notice the approximate meaning of each of these laws here, as their exact meaning is extremely difficult to render.

The literal translation of the word *Rupa* in English is form. *Bheda* means the perception of differences or distinctions. The whole phrase may thus be rendered as meaning the perceptions of the distinctions of forms. As a law of painting, *Rupabheda* is the correct distinguishing of types by properly representing their *laksanas*, colour, etc. ; in other words it means conformity to canonical prescriptions and types.

The law of *Pramanam* is a necessary corollary of the *Rupa-bheda* law, for it means the institution of relationships and proportions between the varied forms perceived by reference to *tala*, the canon of proportions proper to different types. "The varied forms in their very separateness," says the poet, Rabindra Nath Tagore, "must carry something which indicates the paradox of their ultimate unity, otherwise there would be no creation."[1]

The *Pramana* was used by the *Yogacara* school of Buddhist philosophy. Monsieur P. Masson-Oursel has very ably traced the connection between this philosophical meaning and the aesthetic view implied in the word by Vatsayana when he made it one of the laws of painting. "Buddhist (*Yogacara*) idealism . . . professes in the first place that truth is not derived from experience . . . and, in the second place, that knowledge creates its objects instead of moulding itself on pre-existing things, external to the mind. The object does not imply a reality to be reached ; it consists in the completion of a cognitive process correctly carried out ; it is rather an end (*artha*) than a thing. Where realistic common sense believes that it grasps a fact, the idealist sees in this pretended fact only the completion of a spiritual activity. And what can that be but the natural result of the normal and correct activity of thought ? . . . Indian artists and metaphysicians were in agreement that it was not material objects, but more or less *a priori* abstract types, whether types of being or types of knowledge, that are worthy of attention. This conclusion harmonises with the result of almost every investigation that bears on the profounder postulates of Indian thought. For the best established object is *dharana*, which is only being in so far as it becomes 'law.' The most indubitable empirical fact is *karma*, which is event or purpose as it becomes 'activity.' The thing always reduces itself to the aspect of a spiritual operation. Instead of speaking of 'types of being' and 'types of knowledge,' we really ought to recognise only 'types of activity.'" "Aesthetic *pramana*," therefore, "expresses in plastic terms the norm of properly directed action (*correction du savoir-faire*), speculative *pramana* expresses metaphysically the norm of properly directed thought (*correction du savoir-pensée*)."[2]

The relating activity which gives to our experience a unity does so by establishing the proportions of the individual elements by reference to a norm. In art this is achieved by defining the parts of a figure according to the *tala*, and only thus is every element in a good picture or a statue seen in a perfect harmony. To illustrate what

[1] *Rupam*, No. 9, January 1922.
[2] Masson-Oursel, "A Connection between Indian Aesthetics and Philosophy," translated by Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Rupam*, Nos. 27 and 28, July-October 1926.

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would happen if this rule was ignored, Rabindra Nath Tagore has said that "a leg dismembered from the body has the fullest license to make a caricature of itself. But as a member of the body it has its responsibility to the living unity which rules the body; it must behave properly, it must keep proportions. If, by some monstrous chance of physiological profiteering, it could outgrow by yards its fellow-stalker, then we know what a picture it would offer to the spectator and what embarrassment to the body itself."[1]

Bhava means emotion. The dominating emotion infused in a form determines the quality of a work of art.

Lavanya Yojanam may be rendered as the infusion of grace, charm, beauty, or artistic quality into a painting. It has been defined as the liquid lustre which makes the pearls shine forth, and but for which they would be no better than stones.

Sadrishya is imitation of likeness or resemblance to reality.[2] It must be noted, however, that resemblance to reality here does not denote resemblance to things as they are ordinarily seen. "The Indian literature of art reveals the Indian view of classifying all objects into two classes, *drishtan* (seen) and *adrishtan* (unseen). The first relates to objects real, but rare as well as imaginary. These objects have their existence either in nature or in pure imagination, as the case may be. They are thus, i.e. they are as they are; or as they are imagined to be. They are, however, never capable of being seen by the eyes of the body or the mind as they are, but only as they appear. *Sadrishya* indicates what the object thus appears to be; or, in other words, as it is seen by the mind as distinguished from what it is in reality or in imagination. Art is concerned with the production of a likeness of this *Sadrishyan*. A photograph is thus a copy—the thing itself—capable of offering a *drishtan* or appearance; whereas a portrait, based on it, bears only the impress of the appearance, which is capable of being realised from the photograph. An Indian work of art is thus not a copy, but a creation—a creation of impressions produced by the object, real or imaginary. Realism and idealism of the East are not, therefore, of the same import as they are in the West. Realism in India was not absolute but comparative, as if it were really a realism of idealism, because everything was looked upon as essentially unreal, though bearing the semblance of reality."[3] In this respect, then, as in others the conventions of Hindu artists were determined by the Hindu view of life. The Indian mind was always searching for the Real behind nature, or, in other words, for the essential quality of which the universe is merely the appearance. To him, therefore, the term Realism, used in the ordinary European sense, seems to be a misnomer, because if Realism is to mean the copying of things it should be Reality that is copied rather than that which merely looks real but is really only apparent.

Varnika-bhanga is the law relating to the artistic use of implements and materials and the proper mixing of pigments. The importance of the rule is brought out in the supposed remark of Mahadeva (Siva) to Parvati, which I have quoted above: " is fruitless, the repeating of *mantras*, and the telling of beads, austerities and devoti

[1] *Rupam*, No. 9, January 1922.
[2] "It perhaps means recognisable likeness in portraiture" (Coomaraswamy in a letter to the Author).
[3] *Rupam*, Nos. 19 and 20, July-December 1924.

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unless one has gained the knowledge of the *varnas*—the true significance of lettering, the lustre and the virtue of figures."[1]

The *Vishnudharmottaram* and the *Bharata-natya-shastra* both enjoin on the artist a profound knowledge of colours and the manner of fixing them. The primary colours, according to the former, are white, black, yellow, blue, and the colour of *emblic myrobalan*; according to the latter, white, blue, yellow, and red. The mixtures of the last four are declared to be as follows: The combination of white and yellow produces *pandu* (yellowish white), that of white and red produces *padma* (lotus), that of white and blue produces *kapota* (grey), that of yellow and blue yields *harita* (green), that of blue and red, *kashyapa* (reddish), red and yellow mixed become *gaura* (yellowish).[2]

A picture is technically styled *citra* or *pata*, and is defined in a Buddhist *Tantra* as something painted on a new white cloth and fringed. It is declared ordinarily to be two hands long and one hand broad. Besides cloth, which should never be silken, paper and the bark of a tree or its leaves or wooden panels are prescribed for painting.

The actual steps involved in the process of preparing materials are as follows: (1) *Dhauta*, to wash the material; (2) *Ghattita*, rubbing it with rice; (3) *Lanjchitta*, decorating it with ink, and (4) *Ranjita*, painting it with colours.[2]

(5)

ALTHOUGH an elaborate list of names of authorities on architecture has been preserved in the treatise *Matsyapuranam*, we have very scanty literature left to us on the science of architecture itself. We can, however, collect some rules about it from the *Matsyapuranam* and the other *Silpa-shastras* like the Manasara.

The underlying principles here, as in painting and sculpture, are mainly philosophical and religious. The following steps are laid down in the *Kaki kagama* as sacred preliminaries to the actual construction of a building: (1) the investigation of an auspicious time by means of astrological observations for beginning a building; (2) the selection of a suitable site; (3) the performance of sacrificial rites; (4) the planning; (5) the levelling of the site determined; (6) the placing of foundations; (8) the digging of foundations; (9) laying out works; (10) the offering of sacrifice to the gods; (11) the erection of verandas and open spaces; and (12) the laying down of the foundation stone ceremoniously.

The significance of the suitability of various times is summed up in the *Visvakarmaparkasa* in a way which might seem superstitious to us, but which was perhaps

[1] *Bharata-natya-shastra*, 21. 60-62.

[2] "The technique of painting at Ajanta, and of Indian wall painting generally, is as follows: the surface of the hard porous rock was spread over with a layer of clay, cow dung, and powdered rock, sometimes mixed with rice-husks, to a thickness of from three to twenty millimetres. Over this was laid a fine coat of thin lime plaster which was kept moist while the colours were applied, and afterwards lightly burnished. It should be observed that practically all sculptures and sculptured surfaces were coloured in the same way with a thin plaster slip and coloured. The underdrawing is in red on the white plaster surface, then comes a thinnish terraveda monochrome showing some of the red through it, then the local colour, followed by a renewed outline in brown and black with some shading, the latter employed rather to give some impression of roundness or relief than to indicate any effect of light or shade. The bold freedom of the brush strokes seems to show that all the work was free hand, or, if any use was made of stencils, freely redrawn" (Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 89).

[3] For an exhaustive survey of the principles of Indian architecture, see Acharya, *Dictionary of Indian Architecture*.

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determined by considerations of climate : "Anyone having a house constructed in the month of *Chaitra*, suffers from disease ; in *Vaisakha*, gets wealth ; in *Jaistha*, dies ; in *Asada*, might find himself rich in servants and animals ; in *Sravana*, forms new friends ; in *Bhadra*, finds himself friendless ; in *Asvina*, incurs enemies ; in *Kartika*, derives wealth ; in *Margasirsa*, acquires more wealth ; in *Pausa*, may be attacked by thieves ; in *Magha*, may fear fire ; in *Phalguna*, may be very fortunate."

The plot of land which smells of *ghee* (clarified butter) is most appropriate for the Brahmins to build on, that which smells of blood for the Kshatriyas ; if it has the odour of rice the Vaishyas might choose it ; and if it smells of wine the Shudras might build on it.

An alternative rule for the selection of land is as follows :

> Sweet earth for the Brahmin,
> Bitter earth for the Kshatriya,
> Sour earth for the Vaishyas,
> Pungent earth for the Shudras.[1]

Land "at the side of a temple or in front of one, land frequented by devils and hob-goblins, land on the right side of a temple sacred to Kali, or land belonging to the high road, are not suitable for building sites. Should, however, a man be so far lost to decency as to build upon these sites, his wife and children shall die, his cattle and all that he has will perish, and alone in the world, he will wander from place to place, a beggar upon alms. The site of an old and ruined temple, land in which snakes dwell, land upon which pariahs have resided, land upon which the sages have resided, burning-grounds, battle-fields, these are unsuitable for building sites. Should a man build upon them, he and his relations will perish, and the house will become a jungle."[2]

When selected "divide the site into sixty-four parts," it is enjoined. "The four central portions constitute the Brahmin's place (*sthanam*), the four portions or rooms at the corner of the Brahmin's *sthanam* are for the guardian daemons, the eight portions or rooms adjoining these latter are for the guardian deities, the remaining forty-eight portions are for the use of the people."[3]

The rules concerning the building of temples are more elaborate. First of all, adequate care ought to be taken in the construction of a gnomon. It should be "twelve fingers in length, three-fourths of which should be absorbed by the head (or the thickest part of the instrument), and the remaining one-fourth should taper off to a point like a needle, the whole being turned in a lathe, and resembling in shape a conch shell."[4]

There are about twenty kinds of temples: (1) The *Meru* which is sexangular, has twelve stories, variegated windows, four entrances, and is thirty-two cubits wide. (2) The *Mandara* is thirty cubits in extent, and has ten stories and turrets. (3) The *Kailasha*, too, has turrets. It has eight stories, and measures twenty-eight cubits. (4) The *Vimana*, which is twenty-one cubits in extent, has latticed windows. (5) The

[1] "A Tamil Silpa-shastra," Kearns, *Indian Antiquary*, 1876, p. 231.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

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Sita in Ravana's Palace in Lanka Guler.

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Brahma.

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Standing Vishnu.

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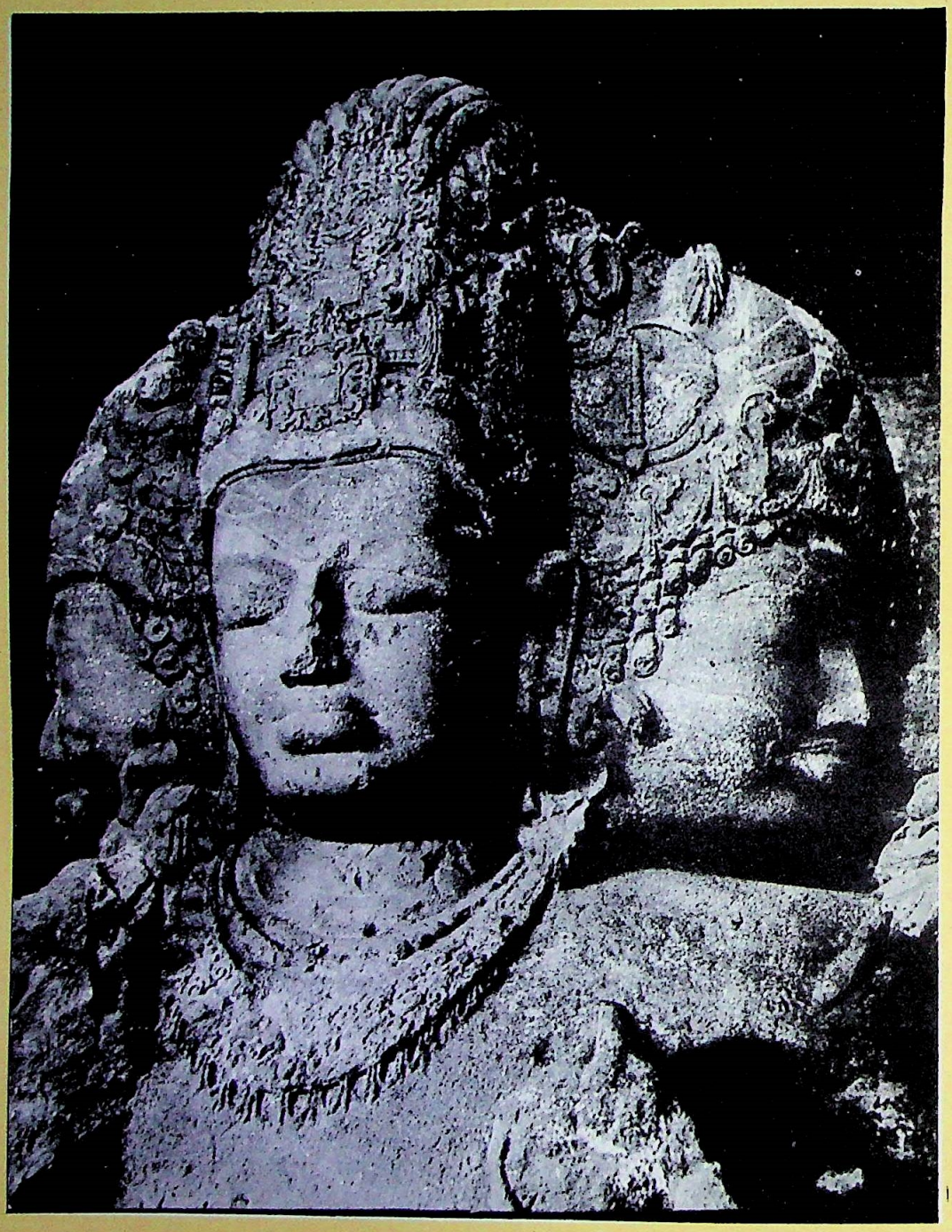

Trimurti from Elephanta.

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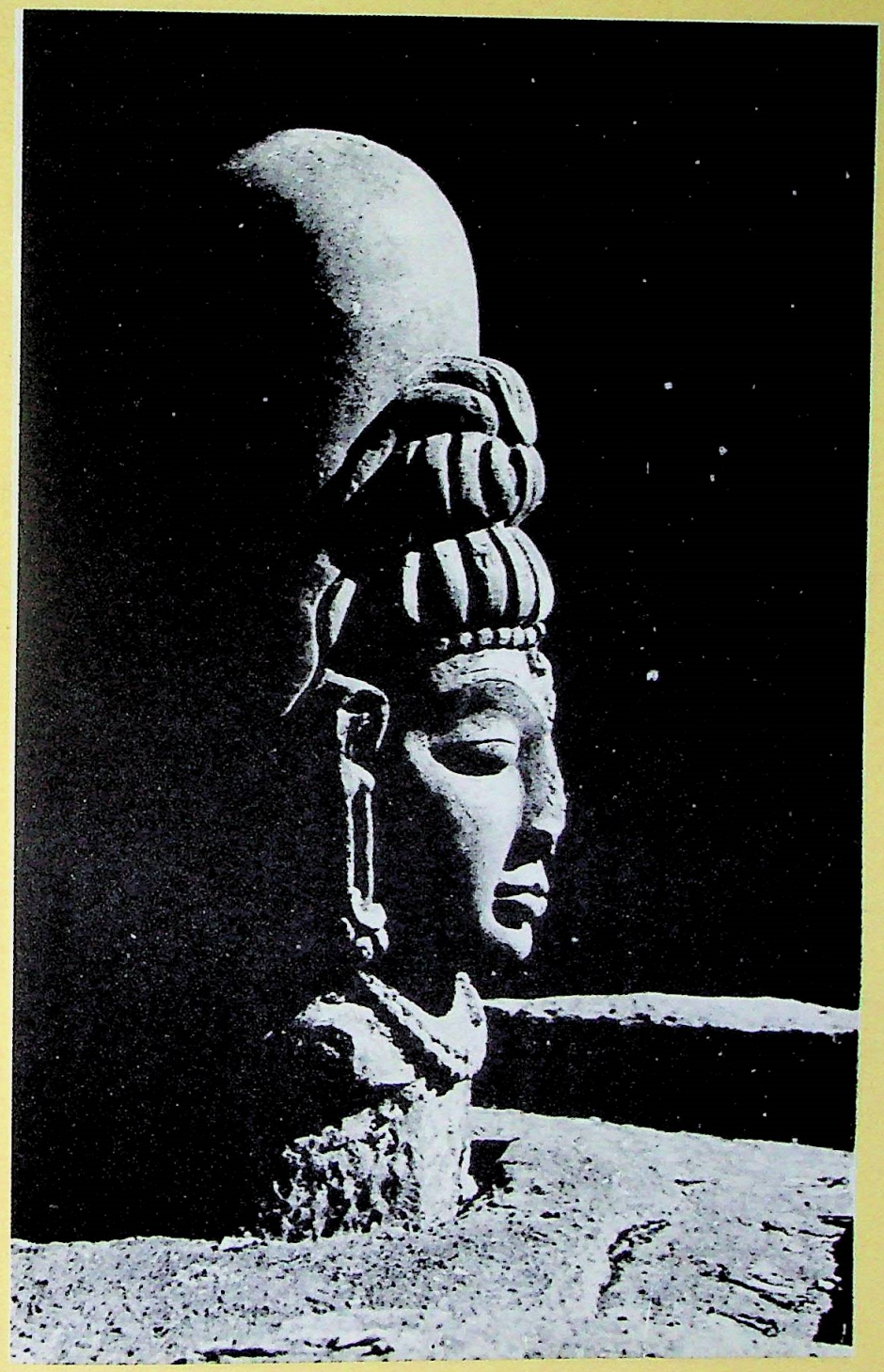

Shiva linga.

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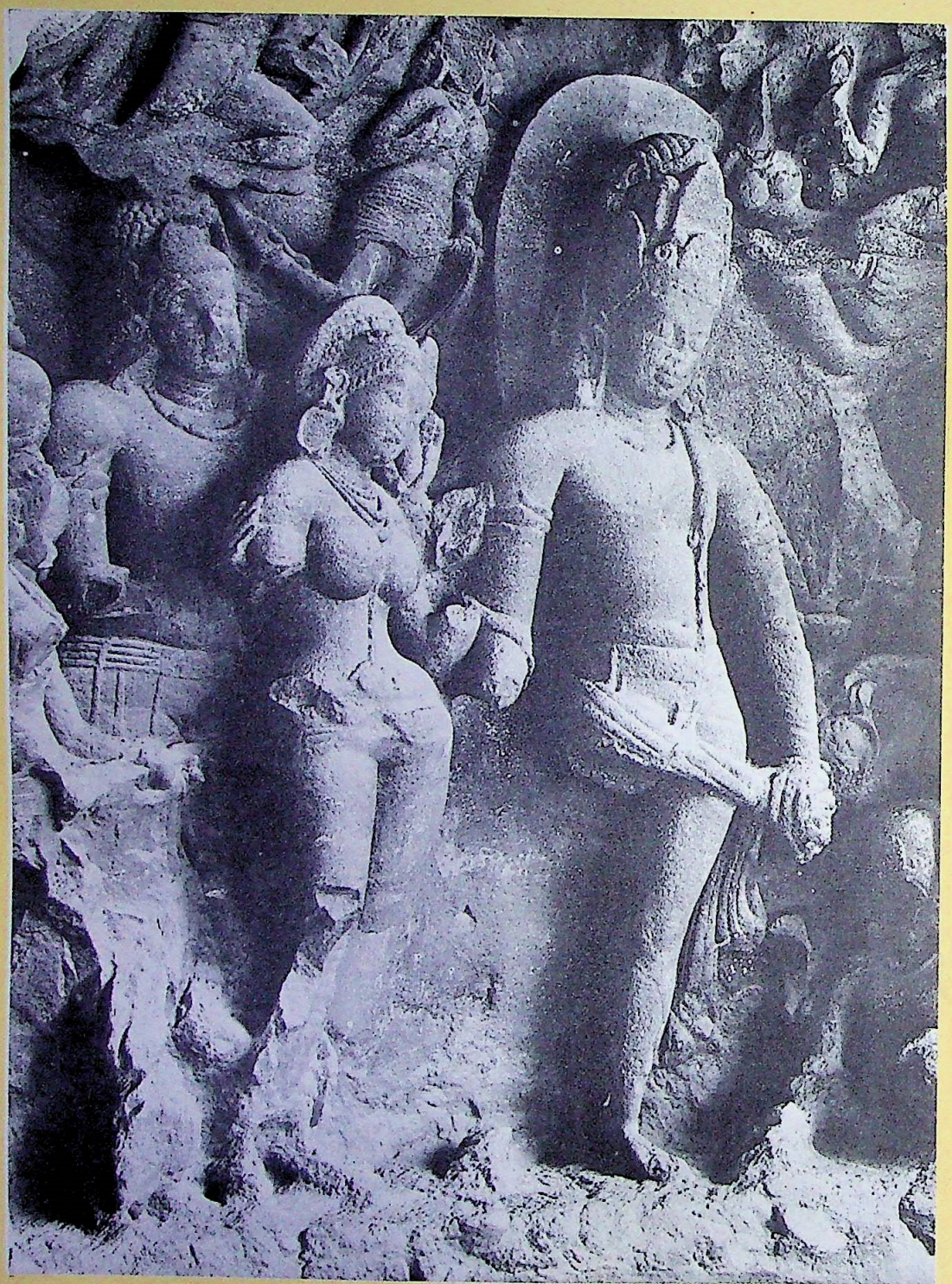

Shiva and Parvati from Elephanta.

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Nataraj.

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Kartikya.

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Nandana, which has six stories and sixteen cupolas, measures thirty-two cubits. (6) The *Samudga* (i.e. a round box) is round. (7) The *Padma* (lotus) has the shape of a lotus, measures eight cubits and has one spire and only one story. (8, 9) The *Garuda* and the *Nandin*, which are modelled on the form of the Sun-eagle, are twenty-four cubits wide. They must be constructed with seven stories and adorned with twenty cupolas. (10) The *Kunjara* (elephant) has a figure like an elephant and is sixteen cubits long and broad at the base. (11) The *Grharaja* also measures sixteen cubits. Both 10 and 11 have a roof with dormer windows. (12) The *Vrsa* (bull) has a single story, and one turret. It is round everywhere and measures twelve cubits. (13) The *Hansa* (swan) is swan-shaped. (14) The *Ghata* has the form of a water-jar and is eight cubits long. (15) The *Sarvatobhadra* has four entrances, many summits, many beautiful windows and five stories and is twenty-five cubits long. (16) The *Sinha* is a building with twelve *angules* and is protected by images of lions and is eight cubits wide. (17-20) The Rotunda, Quadrangle, Octangle, and Sixteen Angles are dark in the interior. The quadrangle has five cupolas, while the rest have only one.

The general design of temples is some such as follows : There is the *garbhagriha* (the womb of the house), the *antarala* (the anti-temple) and the *ardha-mantapa* (the front part). The diameter of the entire length of the building being divided into four and a half parts, of which the *garbhagriha* is to take up two, two and a half, or three ; the *antarala* one and a half, or two ; and the *ardha-mantapa* one or one and a half.

Other rules to be observed in the construction of temples are :

"Let the area of a temple be always divided into sixty-four squares, while it is highly commendable to plan the middle door in one of the four cardinal points. The height of any temple must be twice its own width, and the flight of steps equal to a third part of the whole height (of the edifice). The *adytum* (interior) measures half the extent (of the whole), and has its separate walls all round. Its door is one fourth of the *adytum* in breadth and twice as high. The side frame of the door has a breadth of one fourth of the altitude ; likewise the threshold ; the thickness of both door-posts is . . . equal to one fourth of the breadth. A door with three , five , seven , or nine-fold side frames is much approved. At the lower end, as far as the fourth part of the altitude of the doorpost, should be stationed the statues of the two door-keepers. Let the remaining part be ornamented with (sculptured) birds of good augury, figures, crosses, jars, couples, foliage, tendrils, and goblins. The idol, along with its seat, ought to have a height equal to that of the door, diminished by one eighth, of which two-thirds are appropriated to the image and one third to the seat."[1]

The rules regarding the raising of secular structures are quite as well defined as those about the building of temples. The village, it is enjoined, for instance, "should be divided into eight or nine equal parts, both in length and breadth."[2] The central portion which is appropriate for Brahmins to live in is called the *Brahma*. The next part, styled *Daiva*, is also assigned to the Brahmins. The portion immediately next,

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (N. S.), VI, p. 317.
[2] *Vedic Magazine*, March 1925, pp. 19, 25.

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called *Paisaca*, is given to artisans, labourers, and members of the non--*dwija* (not twice born) castes.

Considerations religious, economic, and social seem to have determined the apportioning of the outlying portions to the different sections of the community. For instance: "Outside the village site on the south should be the sheds for the cattle, on the north should be flower gardens, on the east should be stables, barracks, and on the west the residences of the aristocracy. Inside the village southwards should live merchants, and the labourers should be close to them. The quarters of brick makers should be in the east or north, and near them should live barbers and other artisans engaged in the crafts. In the north-west the quarters of the fishermen should be situated. In the west should be the houses of men engaged in the trade of the flesh. The quarters of oilmen should be in the north. All parts of the town should be supplied with water by means of cisterns, wells, etc. In a town in which all the four classes of people live, the king should have his own residence with its face towards the east or north. On the north-east of the king's palace should live *acarya* (teachers), *purohita* (priests), and the king's other ministers. There should be (sacred) places for fire and water. On the south-east should be stables for elephants, and accommodation for stores. Beyond this, on the east should be the houses of Kshatriyas and the principal artisans, etc., dealing in perfumes, flowers, corns, and juice extractors. In the south-east should be situated the house of potters, moneylenders, banks, and shops for the sale of articles of daily use. In the south-west should be the storehouse and the arsenal. Beyond these, on the south, should be the residential portions of the citizens, dealers in corn, of manufactured articles, of army and police officials, confectioners, wine sellers, butchers, harlots, dancing girls, and *vaisyas*."[1]

[1] *Vedic Magazine*, March 1925, pp. 19, 25.

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AFTERWORD

THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANCIENT ASIATIC ART

By Dr. ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANCIENT ASIATIC ART

By Dr. ANANDA COOMARASWAMY

To look for the first time at the art of Asia is to stand on the threshold of a new world. To make ourselves at home here will require sensibility, intelligence, and patience. It is the business of the historian of art to disengage the intrinsic character of an art, to make it accessible. This can be done in various ways, complementary rather than alternative. All that has been attempted here is to state a philosophy of Asiatic art. What is said takes into account all the arts ; but it has not been possible to illustrate the architecture, literature, music, dance, and many others.

Comparisons have been avoided as far as possible. But in writing mainly for non-Asiatic readers, some reference to Europe has been inevitable, and it must therefore be pointed out that there are two different Europes, the one " modern " or " personal," the other " Christian." The former, roughly speaking, begins with the Renaissance, the latter includes the " Primitives " and a part of Byzantine art ; but the two Europes have always overlapped and interpenetrated. One might say in the same way that there have been two Greek arts, Hellenic, and Hellenistic. On the whole, Asiatic art is quite unlike that of " modern " Europe, in appearance and principle, but very like that of Christian Europe, in both respects. Two works* on the principles of Christian art have been cited because the principles enunciated are so near to those of Asiatic art that these books might be described as adequate introductions to the art of Asia, and may serve to make the latter more comprehensible.

It has been unavoidable to neglect the earlier art of Asia. What has been said applies chiefly to the art of the last two thousand years, which will include the greater part of what will be most readily accessible to the reader. The scope of the present essay excludes also the art of Western Asia, more specifically Muhammadan art, though it would have been interesting and well worth while to show to what extent Muhammadan art is truly Asiatic. It would be obvious, of course, that Sufi thought provides a near equivalent to Zen, and to Vaisnava mysticism, and could easily have inspired a like visual art, notwithstanding that, historically speaking, the Sufi point of view has found expression only in poetry and music and in the Persian love of gardens. This reflection will call to mind the aniconic and iconoclastic character of Muhammadan art : it would have been attractive to expound the sources of this attitude in certain aspects of Mazdean religion and the analogy which it presents with Indian and Far Eastern tendencies aniconic in effect. It might have been shown, in particular, that the traditional Muhammadan interdiction of the representation of the forms of living things, really involves no more than a confusion as to what is meant by " imitation," a subject

* Eric Gill, *Art-nonsense* ; and Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* ("art is an undeviating determination of work to be done, *recta ratio factibilium*").

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which is discussed at some length below. The Doctors of Islam held that the painter would be condemned on the Day of Judgment because in imitating the forms of life he has presumptuously reproduced God's work, but is not himself like God able to endow the forms with sentient life. When we consider, however, the ideal character of the Indian or Chinese icon, which is not designed "as if to function biologically," it will appear that the use of such idols offends against Muhammadan doctrine only in the letter, not in the spirit: and on the other hand, when we examine what has been said about art in India and the Far East, we find many and clearly expressed condemnations of the merely illustrative and illusionary aspects of art. Christian art, regarded by orthodox Muhammadans as idolatrous, in the same way by no means makes its criterion the likeness of any created things; as one of its exponents has said, "Naturalism has always and everywhere been a sign of religious decay." Thus Muhammadan, Hindu-Buddhist, and Christian art all in reality meet on common ground.

That Asia, in all her diversity, is nevertheless a living spiritual unity, was first and eloquently affirmed by Okakura in 1904. This diversity in unity embraces at the very least one half of the cultural inheritance of humanity. Yet it is still customary in Europe to compile histories of art, aesthetics, or philosophy in general with tacit claims to universality, while in fact such works are restricted in contents to the history of Europe. What has been learned about Asia remains at best a series of disconnected facts, apparently arbitrary, because not exhibited in relation to a human will. It will be self-evident then that the true discovery of Asia represents for the majority an adventure still to be achieved. Without some knowledge of Asia, no modern civilization can come into maturity, no modern individual can be regarded as civilized, or even fully aware of what is properly his own. Not that Asia can have importance for Europe as a model—in hybrid styles, authentic forms are merely caricatured, whereas a genuine assimilation of new cultural ideas should and can only result in a development formally altogether different from that of the original mode. What Asia signifies for Europe is means to the enlargement of experience, means to culture in the highest sense of the word, that is to an impartial knowledge of style; and this implies a better understanding of the nature of man, a prerequisite condition of cooperation.

It must not be supposed that we can take possession of new experiences without effort or preparation of any kind. It is not enough to admire only what happens to appeal to our taste at first sight; our liking may be based on purely accidental qualities or on some complete misunderstanding. Far better to begin by accepting, for the time being, the dicta of competent authority as to what is great and typical in Asiatic art, and then to seek to understand it. We must particularly remember that no art is exotic, quaint, or arbitrary in its own environment, and that if any of these terms suggest themselves to us, we are still far removed from any understanding of what is before us. It is hard for most people to appreciate even the art of mediaeval Europe. Science and art are nowadays so far confused that we often hear in a museum the remark, "That was before they knew anything about anatomy": handicraft so unfamiliar that we hear still oftener the inquiry, "Was that all made by hand?" Edification and theology are so far from the interests of the majority that the once

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indivisible connection of religion with art is now conceived as an infringement of human liberty. Modern academic experimental study of the psychology of art seeks only to discover what kinds of aesthetic surfaces compose the most comfortable environment (it is hardly to be wondered at that tired business men are willing to endow researches of this sort). Moreover, to the modern consciousness, art is an individual creation, produced only by persons of peculiar sensibilities working in studios and driven by an irresistible urge to self-expression. We think of art, not as the *form* of our civilization, but as a mysterious quality to be found in certain kinds of things, proper to be " collected," and to be exhibited in museums and galleries. Whereas Christian art and the arts of Asia have always been produced, not by amateurs, but by trained professional craftsmen, proximately as utilities, ultimately *ad majorem gloriam Dei.*

We approach the essential problem, What is art ? What are the values of art from an Asiatic point of view ? A clear and adequate definition can be found in Indian works on rhetoric. According to the *Sahitya Darpana*, I, 3, *Vakyam rasatmakam kavyam*, " Art is a statement informed by ideal beauty." Statement is the body, *rasa* the soul of the work ; the statement and the beauty cannot be divided as separate identities. The nature of the statement is immaterial, for all conceivable statements about God must be true. It is only essential that a necessity for the particular statement should have existed, that the artist should have been identified in consciousness with the theme. Further, as there are two Truths, absolute and relative (*vidya* and *avidya*), so there are two Beauties, the one absolute or ideal, the other relative, and better termed loveliness, because determined by human affections. These two are clearly distinguished in Indian aesthetics.

The first, *rasa*, is not an objective quality in art, but a spiritual activity or experience called " tasting " (*asvada*) ; not affective in kind, not dependent on subject matter or texture, whether lovely or unlovely to our taste but arising from a perfected self-identification with the theme, whatever it may have been. This pure and disinterested aesthetic experience, indistinguishable from knowledge of the impersonal Brahman, impossible to be described otherwise than as an intellectual ecstasy, can be evoked only in the spectator possessing the necessary competence, an inward criterion of truth (*pramana*) ; as competent, the true critic is called *pramatr*, as enjoyer, *rasika*. That God is the actual theme of all art is suggested by Sankaracarya, when he indicates Brahman as the real theme of secular as well as spiritual songs. More concretely, the master painter is said to be one who can depict the dead without life (*cetana*, sentience), the sleeping possessed of it. Essentially the same conception of art as the manifestation of an informing energy is expressed in China in the first of the Six Canons of Hsieh Ho (fifth century), which requires that a work of art should reveal the operation of the spirit in living forms, the word here used for spirit implying rather the breath of life than a personal deity (cf. Greek *pneuma*, Sanskrit *prana*). The Far Eastern insistence on the quality of brush strokes follows naturally ; for the brush strokes, as implied in the second of the Canons of Hsieh Ho, form the bones or body of the work ; outline, *per se*, merely denotes or connotes, but living brush work makes visible what was invisible. It is worth noting that a Chinese ink-painting, monochrome but far from monotone, has to be executed once and for all time without hesitation,

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without deliberation, and no correction is afterwards permissible or possible. Aside from all question of subject matter, the painting itself is thus closer in kind to life, than an oil-painting can ever be.

The opposite of beauty is ugliness, a merely negative quality resulting from the absence of informing energy; which negative quality can occur only in human handiwork, where it plainly expresses the worker's lack of grace, or simple inefficiency. Ugliness cannot appear in Nature, the creative energy being omnipresent and never inefficient. Relative beauty, or loveliness (*ramya*, *sobha*, etc.) on the other hand, that which is pleasing to the heart, or seductive (*manorama*, *manohara*, etc.) and likewise its opposite, the unlovely or distasteful (*jugupsita*), occurs both in nature and in the themes and textures of art, depending on individual or racial taste. By these tastes our conduct is naturally governed; but conduct itself should approximate to the condition of a disinterested spontaneity, and in any case, if we are to be spiritually refreshed by the spectacle of an alien culture, we must admit the validity of its taste, at least imaginatively and for the time being.

Aesthetic ecstasy, as distinct from the enjoyment of loveliness, is said to arise from the exaltation of the purity (*sattva*) of the *pramatr*, which purity is an internal quality "which averts the face from external appearances (*bahyameyavimukhatapadaka*)"; and the knowledge of ideal beauty is partly "ancient," that is to say, innate, and partly "present," that is to say matured by cultivation. This ideal delight cannot vary in essence, or be conceived of as otherwise than universal. Apprehended intuitively, without a concept, that is, not directed to or derived from specific knowledge (Kant), *id quod visum placet* (St. Thomas Aquinas), and consisting, not in pleasure, but in a delight of the reason (*nandicinmaya*, *praharsa*), it cannot as such be analysed into parts, discoursed upon, or taught directly, as is proved both by the witness of men of genius and by experience. In any case, the ecstasy of perfect experience, aesthetic or other, cannot be sustained. Returning to the world, its source becomes immediately objective, something not merely to be experienced, but also to be known. From this point of view, a real indifference to subject matter, such as professional aesthetes sometimes affect, could only be regarded as a kind of insensibility; the "mere archaeologist," whose impartiality is a positive activity far removed from indifference, is often in fact nearer to the root of the matter, humanly speaking, than is the collector or "lover" of art.

The work of art is not merely an occasion of ecstasy, and in this relation inscrutable, but also according to human needs and therefore according to standards of usefulness, which can be defined and explained. This good or usefulness will be of two main kinds, religious and secular; one connected with theology, adapted to the worship and service of God as a person, the other connected with social activity, adapted to the proper ends of human life, which are defined in India as vocation or function (*dharma*), pleasure (*kama*), and the increasing of wealth (*artha*). Even were it maintained that Asiatic art had never attained to perfection in its kind, it would not be denied that a knowledge of these things could provide an absorbing interest, and must involve a large measure of sympathetic understanding. It is actually a knowledge of these things which alone can be taught; explanation is required, because the mind is idle, and un-

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willing to recognize beauty in unfamiliar forms, perhaps unable to do so while distracted by anything apparently arbitrary or capricious, or distasteful in the work itself, or by curiosity as to its technique or meaning. All that man can do for man, scholar for public, is to disintegrate those prejudices that stand in the way of the free responses and activity of the spirit. It would be impertinent to ask whether or not the scholar himself be in a state of grace, since this lies only in the power of God to bestow; all that is required of him is a humane scholarship in those matters as to which he owes an explanation to the public. Only when we have been convinced that a work originally answered to intelligible and reasonable needs, tastes, interests, or aspirations, whether or not these coincide with our own (a matter of no significance, where censorship is not in view), only when we are in a position to take the work for granted as a creation which could not have been otherwise than it is, are conditions established which make it possible for the mind to acknowledge the splendour of the work itself, to relish its beauty, or even its grace.

If then we are to progress from a merely capricious attraction to selected works, possibly by no means the best of their kind, we shall have to concern ourselves to understand the character (*svabhava*) of the art; more simply expressed, to learn what it is all about, to comprehend it in operation. This is tantamount to an understanding of our neighbour; he alone, for and by whom the art was devised, affords a valid explanation of its existence. To understand him, we require not merely a vague good will, but also real contact: "*Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichter's Lande gehen.*" But the homelands of the Poetic Genius are often remote in time as well as space, and in any case mere travel on the part of those who have neither eyes to see nor ears to hear is rather worse than useless. Generally speaking, one who has not been educated *for* travel, will never be educated *by* travel; he who would bring back the wealth of the Indies, must take the wealth of the Indies with him. We are not making too great a demand; in any case the man of today can hardly be called educated who knows no other literature than his own, can hardly be regarded as a "good European" who knows only Europe. The normal man, without proposing to become a professional scholar, or what is essential for research, to control any Oriental language, can obtain what he most needs merely from the reading of Oriental literature in the best translations (despite their inevitable shortcomings), and certain selected works by more specialised scholars. As Mencius said in giving advice to a pupil, "The Way of truth is like a great road. It is not difficult to know. Do you go home and search for it and you will have an abundance of teachers."

I am well aware that an art requiring literary interpretation is now discredited; so for that matter is art in any way connected with human life. However, the comparison is false. We are not suggesting that study should be confined to a search for the literary sources of the themes of particular works, but that literature can provide the most readily available guide to an understanding of the entire background against which the art has flowered and without which it could be regarded only as a *tour de force*. We must in one way or another acquire a sense of *terre à terre*, if the art is to be a reality in our eyes. We admit and repeat that the art of Asia requires explanation, nor is this a disparagement in any sense. A man can expect to understand without effort

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and at first sight only the art of his own day and place; it is only the art of today that can be condemned as arbitrary or pathological if it remains impenetrable to the man of average intelligence and education. Everyone does in fact understand the lines of motor cars and the subtleties of current fashions, contemporary dance music, and the comic strips; all of which seem difficult, abstract, and mysterious to an Asiatic not versed in these arts. For the rest, it will be only a strictly naturalistic art (to use a contradiction in terms) that can dispense with explanation; we can recognise a horse whenever we see it, in a film from Tibet or one from the Wild West, and if the Chinese language consisted entirely of onomatopoeic words, we should be able to understand a good deal of it without effort. But the more absolute the beauty of an alien work, the more fully it is what it is intended to be, the less intelligible will be its functioning; but to call it, therefore, mysterious would be only to give a name to our ignorance, for such works were never obscure to those for whom they were made. The alien work cannot even be approached as a phenomenon isolated from the life in which it arose; only when it has become for us an inevitable fact, born of human nature having a given inheritance and acting in a given environment, and through those very conditions enabled to achieve universal values, can we begin to feel that it belongs to us.

"Who paints a figure, if he cannot be it, cannot draw it." These words of Dante (*Canzone*, XVI) utterly alien to the assertions of those who now maintain that art can be successfully divorced from its theme and from experience, are alone sufficient to establish a fundamental identity of European and Asiatic art, transcending all possible stylistic difference, and all possible distinction of themes. But whereas Europe has only rarely and rather unconsciously subscribed to this first truth about art, Asia has consistently and consciously acted in awareness that the goal is only reached when the knower and the known, subject and object, are identified in one experience. In European religion, the application of this doctrine has been a heresy. In India it has been a cardinal principle of devotion that to worship God one must become God (*Nadevo devam arcayet: Sivo bhutva Sivam vajet*). This is in fact a special application of the general method of Yoga, which as a mental discipline proceeds from attention concentrated upon the object, to an experience of the object by self-identification in consciousness with it. In this condition the mind is no longer distracted by *cittavrtti*, preception, curiosity, self-thinking and self-willing; but draws to itself, *akarsati*, as though from an infinite distance the very form of that theme to which attention was originally directed. This form, *jnana-sattva-rupa*, imagined in stronger and better lineaments than the vegetative mortal eye can see, and brought back as it were from an inner source to the outer world, may be used directly as an object of worship, or may be externalised in stone or pigment to the same end.

These ideas are expanded in the ritual procedure which we find enjoined upon the images in the medieval *Sadhanamalas*. The details of these rituals are most illuminating, and though they are enunciated with special reference to cult images, are of quite general application, since the artist's theme can only be rightly thought of as the object of his devotion, his *devata* for the time being. The artist, then, purified by a spiritual and physical ritual, working in solitude, and using for his purpose a canonical prescription (*sadhana, mantra*), has to accomplish first of all a complete self-iden-

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tification with the indicated concept, and this is requisite even though the form to be represented may embody terrible supernatural features or may be of the opposite sex to his own ; the desired form then " reveals itself visually against the sky, as if seen in a mirror, or in a dream," and using this vision as his model, he begins to work with his hands. The great Vision of Amida must have revealed itself thus notwithstanding that the subject had already been similarly treated by other painters ; for the virtue of a work is not in novelty of conception, but intensity of realisation.

The principle is the same in the case of the painter of scenic, animal, or human subjects. It is true that in this case Nature herself provides the text : but what is Nature—appearance or potential ? In the words of Ching Hao, a Chinese artist and author of the T'ang period, the Mysterious Painter " first experiences in imagination the instincts and passions of all things that exist in heaven or earth ; then in a style appropriate to the subject, natural forms flow spontaneously from his hand." On the other hand, the Astounding Painter, " though he achieves resemblance in detail, misses universal principles, a result of mechanical dexterity without intelligence . . . when the operation of the spirit is weak, all the forms are defective." In the same way Wang Li, who in the fourteenth century painted the Hua Mountain in Shenshi, declares that if the idea in the mind of the artist be neglected, mere representation will have no value ; at the same time, if the natural forms be neglected, not only will the likeness be lost, but also everything else : " Until I knew the shape of the Hua Mountain, how could I paint a picture of it ? But even after I had visited it and drawn it from nature, the ' idea.' was still immature. Subsequently I brooded upon it in the quiet of my house, on my walks abroad, in bed and at meals, at concerts, in intervals of conversation and literary composition. One day when I was resting I heard drums and flutes passing the door. I leapt up and cried, ' I have got it.' Then I tore up my old sketches and painted it again. This time my only guide was the Hua Mountain itself."

Similarly in literature. When the Buddha attains Enlightenment, in Yoga trance (*samadhi*), the *Dharma* presents itself to him in entirety and fully articulate, ready to be uttered to the world. When Valmiki composes the *Ramayana*, though he is already quite familiar with the course of the story, he prepares himself, by the practice of Yoga until he sees before him the protagonists acting and moving as though in real life. As Chuang Tzu has said, " The mind of the sage, being in repose, becomes the mirror of the Universe, the speculum of all creation" : nothing is hidden from it. Though the idea of literal imitation is in no way essential to or even tolerable to Christian art, it has played a large part in popular European views about art, and further, it cannot be denied that European art in decadence has always inclined to make of literal imitation a chief end of art. In Asia, however, views about art are not propounded by popular thinkers ; and decadence finds expression, not in a change of principle, but either in loss of vitality, or what amounts to the same thing, excessive elaboration, rococo. It will be useful then to consider just what is meant in Asia by words denoting imitation or resemblance, used with reference to art, though the discussion will have a familiar ring for students of Aristotle. Just as in Europe, from the time of Aristotle onwards, " imitation " has had a dual significance, meaning (1) empirically the most

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literal mimicry attainable, and (2) in aesthetics the imitation of Nature *in sua operatione* (St. Thomas Aquinas), or "imaginative embodiment of the ideal form of reality" (Webster's Dictionary): so in Asia, Sanskrit *sadrsya*, "resemblance," and *lokavrtta anukarana*, "making according to the movement of the world," and Chinese *hsing-ssu*, "shape-likeness," are used both empirically and in aesthetics, but with an essential difference.

As to Chinese *hsing-ssu*, a multitude of texts could be adduced to show that it is not the outward appearance (*hsing*) which is to be exhibited as such, but rather the idea (*i*) in the mind of the painter, or the immanent divine spirit (*shen*), or breath of life (*chi*), that is to be revealed by a use of natural form directed to this end. We have not merely the First Canon of Hsieh Ho, that the work of art must reveal "The operation of the spirit (*chi*) in life movement," but also such sayings as "By means of natural shape (*hsing*) represent divine spirit (*shen*)," "The painters of old painted the idea (*i*) and not merely the shape (*hsing*)," "Those (painters) who neglect natural shape (*hsing*) and secure the normative idea (*i chih*) are few," and with reference to a degenerate time, "What the age means by pictures is resemblance (*ssu*)." Thus none of the terms cited by any means implies a theory of art as illusion: for the East, as for St. Thomas, *ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione*.

The proper connotation of these words as used in aesthetics can be deduced from the actual procedure of artists, already alluded to, from actual works of art, or from their employment in treatises on aesthetics. As to the actual works, we may be deceived at first sight. When Oriental art impresses us by its actuality, as in Japanese paintings of birds or flowers, in Pallava animal sculpture, or at Ajanta by what seems to be spontaneity of gesture, we are easily led to think that this has involved a study of Nature in our sense, too ready to judge the whole stylistic development in terms of degrees of naturalism. Yet, if we analyse such work, we shall find that it is not anatomically correct, that the spontaneous gestures had long since been classified in text books of dancing, with reference to moods and passions equally minutely subdivided in works on rhetoric; and that with all these matters the artist had to be familiar, and could not have helped being familiar, because they formed an integral part of the intellectual life of the age. We may say indeed, that whenever, if ever, Oriental art reproduces evanescent appearances, textures, or anatomical construction with literal accuracy, this is merely incidental, and represents the least significant part of the work. When we are stirred, when the work evokes in us a sense of reality akin to that which we feel in the presence of living forms, it is because here the artist has become what he represents, he himself is recreated as beast or flower or deity, he feels in his own body all the tensions appropriate to the passion that animates his subject.

* * *

Because theology was the dominant intellectual passion of the race, Oriental art is largely dominated by theology. We do not refer here only to the production of cult images, for which India was primarily responsible, but to the organisation of thought in terms of types of activity. Oriental art is not concerned with Nature, but with the

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nature of Nature ; in this respect it is nearer to science than to our modern ideas about art. Where modern science uses names and algebraic formulae in establishing its hierarchy of forces, the East has attempted to express its understanding of life by means of precise visual symbols. Indian *Siva-Sakti*, Chinese *Yang* and *Yin*, Heaven and Earth, in all their varied manifestations are the polar opposites whence all phenomenal tensions must arise. In this constant reference to types of activity, Oriental art differs essentially from Greek art and its prolongations in Europe : Greek types are archetypes of being, *Ding an sich*, external to experience, and conceived of as though reflected in phenomena ; Indian types are acts or modes of action, only valid in a conditioned universe, correct under given circumstances, but not absolute ; not thought of as reflected in phenomena, but as representing to our mentality the informing energies to which phenomena owe their peculiarity. Historically, the latter mode of thought might be described as an improvement of animism.

The corresponding Indian theory of knowledge regards the source of truth, not mere perception (*pratyaksa*), but an inwardly known criterion (*pramana*) which " at one and the same time gives form to knowledge and is the cause of knowledge " (Dignaga, *Karika* 6) ; it being only required that such knowledge shall not contradict experience. We can make this doctrine clearer by the analogy of conscience (Anglo-Saxon " inwit "), still generally regarded as an inward criterion which both gives form to correct conduct, and is its cause. But whereas the Occidental conscience operates only in the field of ethics, the Oriental conscience, *pramana*, *chih*, etc., orders all forms of activity, mental, aesthetic, and ethical : truth, beauty, and goodness (as activities, and therefore relative), are thus related by analogy, not by likeness, none deriving its sanction from any of the others, but each directly from a common principle of order (*rta*, etc.) which represents the pattern of the activity of God, or in Chinese terms, of Heaven and Earth. Just as conscience is externalised in rules of conduct, so aesthetic " conscience " finds expression in rules or canons of proportion (*tala*, *talamana*) proper to different types, and in the physiognomy (*laksanas*) of iconography and cultivated taste, prescribed by authority and tradition : the only " good form " is *sastramana*. As to the necessity for such rules, which are contingent by nature, but binding in a given environment, this follows from the imperfection of human nature. Man is indeed more than a merely functional and behaviouristic animal (the gambolling of lambs is not " dancing "), but he has not yet attained to such an identification of the inner and outer life as should enable him to act at the same time spontaneously and altogether conveniently. Spontaneity (*sahaja*) of action can be attributed to Bodhisattvas " because their discipline is in union with the very essence of all Buddhas " (Asvaghosa) ; Ching Hao's " Divine Painter," indeed, " makes no effort of his own, his hand moves spontaneously" ; but short of this divine perfection, we can only aspire to the condition of the " Mysterious Painter " who " works in a style appropriate to his subject." Or as expressed with reference to the strictly ordered art of the drama, " All the activities of the gods, whether at home or afield, spring from a natural disposition of the mind, but all the activities of men result from the conscious working of the will ; therefore it is that the details of the actions to be done by men must be carefully prescribed " (*Natya Sastra*, II, 5). Objection to such rules has often been made,

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ostensibly in the interest of the freedom of the spirit, practically however on behalf of the freedom of the affections. But rules such as we speak of, having been evolved by the organism for its own ends, are never arbitrary in their own environment; they may better be regarded as the form assumed by liberty, than as restrictions.

An admirable illustration of this can be found in Indian music. Here we have an elaborate system of modes, each employing only certain notes and progressions, which must be strictly adhered to, and each appropriate to a given time of the day or particular season: yet where the Western musician is bound by a score and by a tempered keyboard, the Oriental music is not written, and no one is recognised as a musician who does not *improvise* within the given conditions; we even find two or more musicians improvising by common consent. In China and Japan, there are detailed and elaborate treatises solely devoted to the subject of bamboo painting, and this study forms an indispensable part of an artist's training. A Japanese painter once said to me, "I have had to concentrate on the bamboo for many, many years, still a certain technique for the rendering of the tips of bamboo leaves eludes me." And yet a finished bamboo painting in monochrome, executed with an incredible economy of means, seems to be wet with dew and to tremble in the wind. It is only when rules are conceived of as applied in an alien environment, when one style, whether of thought, conduct, or art, is judged by another, that they assume the aspect of regulations; and those modern artists who affect Primitive, Classical, or Oriental mannerisms, are alone responsible for their own bondage. What we have said by no means implies that anybody else's rules will serve to guide our hands, but rather that in any period of chaos and transition such as the present, we are rather to be pitied for than congratulated on our so-called freedom. A new condition of civilisation, a new style, cannot be said to have reached a conscious maturity until it has discovered the criteria proper to itself.

Let us now consider how the doctrine of *pramana* can be recognised in art itself. We have seen that the virtue of art does not consist in copying anything, but in what is expressed or evoked. The conception of a naturalistic art, though we know what it means in popular parlance, represents a contradiction in terms; art is by definition conventional, and it is only by convention (*samketa*) that art is comprehensible at all. Oriental art, all pure art, though it uses inevitably a vocabulary based on experience (God himself, using convenient means, *upaya*, speaks in the language of the world), does not invite a comparison with the unattainable perfection of Nature, but relies exclusively on its own logic and on its own criteria, which logic and criteria cannot be tested by standards of truth or goodness applicable in other fields of action. If, for example, an icon is provided with numerous heads or arms, arithmetic will assist us to determine whether or not the iconography is correct, *agamarthavisamvadi*, but only our own response to its qualities of energy and characteristic order can determine its value as art. Krishna, seducer of the milkmaids of the Braja-mandala, is not presented to us as a model on the plane of conduct.

Where Western art is largely conceived as seen in a frame or through a window, from a fixed point of view, and so brought toward the spectator, the Oriental image really exists only in our own mind and heart, and is projected thence onto space; this is

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apparent not merely in "anthropomorphic" icons, but also in landscape, which is typically presented as seen from more than one point of view, or in any case from a conventional, not a "real" point of view. Where Western art depicts a moment of time, an arrested action, an "effect" of light, Oriental art represents a continuous (though as we have seen, not eternal) condition. The Dance of Siva takes place not merely as an historical event in the Taraka Forest, nor even at Cidambaram, but for ever in the heart of the worshipper; the loves of Radha and Krishna, as Nilakantha reminds us, are not an historical narrative, but a constant relation between the soul and God. The Buddha attained Enlightenment countless ages ago, his manifestation is still accessible, and will so remain. The latter doctrine, expounded in the *Saddharmapundarika*, is reflected in the sculptured hierarchies of Borobudur. It is impossible that the same mentality should not be present equally in thought and art; how could the Mahayanist, who may deny that any Buddha ever in fact existed, or that any doctrine was taught, have been interested in a portrait of Gautama? The image, then, is not the likeness of anything; it is a spatial, but incorporeal, intangible form, complete in itself; its aloofness ignores our presence, for in fact it was meant to be used, not to be inspected. We do not know how to use it. Too often we do not ask how it was meant to be used. We judge as an ornament for the mantelpiece what was made as a means of realisation, an attitude hardly less naive than that of the Hindu peasants who are said to have converted a disused steam plough to new service as an icon.

The Indian or Far Eastern icon (*pratima*), carved or painted, is neither a memory image nor an idealisation, but ideal in the mathematical sense, of the same kind as a *yantra*; and its peculiarity in our eyes arises as much from this condition as from the unfamiliar detail of the iconography. For example, it fills the whole field of vision at once, all is equally clear and equally essential; the eye is not led to range from one point to another, as in empirical vision or the study of a photographic record. There is no feeling of texture or flesh, but only of stone, metal, or pigment; from a technical point of view this might be thought of as the result of a proper respect for the material, but it is actually a consequence of the psychological approach, which conceives God in stone or paint otherwise than as God in the flesh, or an image otherwise than as an Avatara. The parts are not organically related, for it is not contemplated that they should function biologically; they are ideally related, being the elements of a given type, "*Ingredienz einer Versammlung wesensbezeichnender Anschauungswerte.*" This does not mean that the various parts are unrelated, or that the whole is not a unity, but the relation is mental rather than functional.

All this finds direct expression also in composition. Even in the freer treatment of still definitely religious themes, at Ajanta, in Vaisnava (Rajput) painting, or in Chinese landscape, the composition may seem at first sight to be lacking in direction; there is no central point, no emphasis, no dramatic crisis, apparently no structure, though we are ready to admit that the space has been wonderfully utilised, and so call the work decorative, meaning, I suppose, that it is not offensively insistent. Similarly in music and dancing, where the effect on an untrained Western observer is usually one of monotony—"we do not know what to make of music which is dilatory without being

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sentimental, and utters passion without vehemence" (Fox-Strangways). The paintings of Ajanta, certainly lacking in those obvious symmetries which are described in modern text books of composition, have been called incoherent. This is in fact a mode of design not thought out as pattern with a view to pictorial effect; yet "one comes in the end to recognise that profound conceptions can dispense with the formulas of calculated surface arrangement and have their own occult means of knitting together forms in apparent diffusion" (Binyon).

Similar phenomena can be observed in literature. Western critics, who often speak in the same way of pre-Renaissance European writing, express this by saying that in Asiatic literature "there is no desire, and therefore no ability, to portray character" (Waley). Take one of the supreme achievements of the Far East, the *Genji Monogatari* of Murasaki: Waley, who made an English version by no means satisfactory to Japanese critics, but still embodying some part of the wonderful grace of the original, points out that "the sense of reality with which she (the author) invests her narrative is not the result of realism in the ordinary sense.... Still less is it due to solid character building; Murasaki's characters are mere embodiments of some dominant characteristic." The *Genji Monogatari* might be compared with Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parsifal.* In each of these great works we do sense a kind of psychological modernity, and no doubt the narration is more personal and intimate than that of Homer or the *Mahabharata.* Yet the effect is not a result of accumulated observation, nor of any emphasis laid on individual temperamental peculiarities. The characters, just as in Oriental paintings, differ more in what they do, than in what they look like. Oriental art rarely depicts or describes emotions for their own spectacular value: it is amply sufficient to put forward the situation itself, unnecessary to emphasise its effects, where you can rely upon the audience to understand what must be taking place behind the actor's mask. Oriental art is not a labour-saving device, where nothing can be left out, lest the spectator should have to exert himself; on the contrary, "it is the spectator's own energy (*utsaha*) that is the cause of aesthetic experience (*asvadana*), just as in the case of children playing with clay elephants or the like" (*Dasarupa*, IV, 47 and 50).

Before leaving the subject of literature it should be observed that what we have called lack of emphasis or of dramatic crisis is expressed also in the actual intonation of Oriental languages. In all these languages there is both accent and tone: but Oriental poetry is always quantitative, and so little is the meaning brought out by stress, even in the spoken languages, that the European student must first learn to avoid *all* stress, before he can rightly employ such stress as is actually correct.

What has been said will also apply to portraiture, little as this might have been expected: here too the conception of types predominates. It is true that in classical Indian literature we frequently read of portraits, which though they are usually painted from memory, are constantly spoken of as recognisable and even admirable likenesses; if not at least recognisable, they could not have fulfilled their function, usually connected with love or marriage. Both in China and in India, from very ancient times onward, we find ancestral portraits, but these were usually prepared after death, and so far as we know have the character of effigies rather than likenesses. In the

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Pratima-nataka of Bhasa, the hero, though he marvels at the execution of the figures in an ancestral chapel, does not recognise the effigies of his own parents, and thinks the figures may be those of gods. Similarly in Cambodia and Farther India generally, where a deified ancestor was represented by a statue, this was in the form of the deity of his devotion. It is now only possible from an inscription to tell when a portrait is before us.

The painted portrait functioned primarily as a substitute for the living presence of the original; still one of the oldest treatises on painting, the *Citralaksana* contained in the Tanjur, though it refers the origin of painting in the world to this requirement, actually treats only of the physiognomical peculiarities (*laksanas*) of types. Even more instructive is a later case, occurring in one of the *Vikramacarita* stories: here a king is so much attached to his queen that he keeps her at his side, even in Council; this departure from custom and propriety is disapproved of by his courtiers and the king consents to have a portrait painted, to serve as substitute for the queen's presence. The court painter is allowed to see the queen; he recognises that she is a Padmini (Lotus-lady, one of the four physical-psychological types under which women are classed by Hindu rhetoricians) and paints her accordingly *padmini-laksanayuktam* "with the characteristic marks of a Lotus-lady," and yet the portrait, spoken of not merely as *rupam*, "a figure," but as *svarupam*, "her very form," is felt to be a true likeness. Chinese works on portrait painting refer only to types of features and facial expression, canons of proportion, suitable accessories, and varieties of brush-stroke proper to the draperies; the essence of the subject must be revealed, but there is nothing about anatomical accuracy.

Life itself reflects the same conditions. At first sight even the most highly evolved Asiatics look all alike to a Western eye, presenting the same aspect of monotony to which we have referred above. This effect is partly a result of unfamiliarity; the Oriental recognises actual variety where the European is not yet trained to do so. But it is also in part due to the fact that Oriental life is modelled on types of conduct sanctioned by tradition. For India, Rama and Sita represent ideals still potent, the *svadharma* of each caste is an ascertained *mode* of conduct; and until recently every Chinese accepted as a matter of course the concept of manners established by Confucius. The Japanese word for "rudeness" means "acting in an unexpected way." Where large groups of men act and dress alike, they will not only to some degree look alike, but are alike—to the eye.

Here then, life is designed like a garden, not allowed to run wild. All this formality, for a cultured spectator, is far more attractive than can be the variety of imperfection so freely shown by the plain and blunt, or as he thinks, "more sincere" European. For the Oriental himself, this external conformity, whereby the man is lost in the crowd as true architecture seems to be a part of its native landscape, constitutes a privacy within which the individual character can flower unhampered. This is also particularly true in the case of women, whom the East has so long sheltered from necessities of self-assertion: one may say that for women of the aristocratic classes in India or Japan, there existed no freedom whatever, in the modern sense. Yet these same women moulded by centuries of stylistic living, achieved an absolute perfection in their kind,

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and perhaps Asiatic art can boast of no higher achievement than this. In India, where the " tyranny of caste " strictly governs marriage, diet, and every detail of outward conduct, there exists and has always existed unrestricted freedom of belief and thought. It has been well said that civilisation is style. An immanent culture in this way endows every individual with an outward grace, a typological perfection, such as only the rarest beings can achieve by their own effort (this kind of perfection does not belong to genius) ; whereas a democracy, which requires of every man to save his own soul, actually condemns each to an exhibition of his own irregularity and imperfection ; and this imperfection only too easily passes over into an exhibitionism which makes a virtue of vanity, and is complacently described as self-expression.

We have then to realise that life itself, the different ways in which the difficult problems of human association have been solved, represents the ultimate and highest of the arts of Asia : he who would comprehend and enjoy the arts of Asia, if only as a spectacle, must comprehend them in this highest form, directly at the source from which they proceed. All judgment of the art, all criticism of the life, by measurement against Western standards is an irrelevance that must defeat its own ends.

* * *

Everyone will be aware that Asiatic art is by no means exclusively theological, in the literal sense of the word. India knows, if not a secular, at least a romantic development in Rajput painting ; China possesses the greatest landscape art in the world ; Japan has interpreted animals and flowers with unequalled tenderness and sensibility, and developed in Ukiyoye an art that can only be called secular. Broadly speaking, we may say that the romantic and idealistic movements are related to the hieratic art, which is on the whole the older art, as mysticism is related to ritual. Allusion may be made, for example, to the well-known case of the Zen priest, Tan-hsia, who used a wooden image of Buddha to make his fire—not, of course, as an iconoclast, but because he was cold ; to the Zen doctrine of the Scripture of the Universe ; and to the Vaisnava conception of the world as a theophany. But these developments do not represent an arbitrary break with hieratic modes of thought : as the theology itself may be called an improvement of animism, so Zen represents an improvement of Yoga achieved through heightened sensibility, Vaisnava painting an improvement of *bhakti* through a perfected sensual experience.

In a " Meditation upon Buddha " translated into Chinese in A. D. 420, the believer is taught to see not merely Gautama the monk, but One endowed with all those spiritual glories that were visible to his disciples ; we are still in the realms of theology. A century later, Bodhidharma came to Canton from Southern India ; he taught, mainly by silence, that the absolute is immanent in man, that this " treasure of the heart " is the only Buddha that exists. His successor Buddhapriya codified the stations of meditation : but Zen was to be practised " in a quiet room, or under a tree, or among tombs, or sitting on the dewy earth," not before a Buddha image. The method of teaching of Zen masters was by means of symbolic acts, apparently arbitrary commands or meaningless questions, or simply by reference to Nature. Zen dicta disturb our compla-

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cence, as who should say, " A man may have justice on his side and yet be in the wrong," or " to him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath." Logically inscrutable, Zen may be described as direct action, as immediacy of experience. Still, the idea of Zen is completely universal : " consider the lilies," " a mouse is miracle enough," " when thou seest an eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius," illustrate Zen. There are many Indian analogies : for example, our conduct should be like that of the sun, which shines because it is its nature to shine, not from benevolence ; and already in one of the Jatakas (No. 460), the evanescence of the morning dew suffices to enlightenment.

The sources of the tradition are partly Taoist, partly Indian. One might say that the only ritual known to Zen is that of the tea ceremony, in which simplicity is carried to the highest point of elaboration : but Zen is equally demonstrated in the art of flower arrangement ; Zen priests lead an active and ordered life, and to say, " This is like a Zen monastery," means that a place is kept in the neatest possible order. After the tenth century it is almost entirely Zen terminology that is used in the discussion of art. Perhaps a majority of artists in the Ashikaga period were Zen priests. Zen art represents either landscape, birds, animals, or flowers ; or episodes from the lives of the great Zen teachers, of which last a very familiar aspect may be cited in the innumerable representations of Daruma (Bodhidharma) as a shaggy, beetle-browed recluse.

Zen, seeking realisation of the divine nature in man, proceeds by way of opening his eyes to a like spiritual essence in the world of Nature external to himself. The word " romantic " has been applied to the art only for want of a better designation ; the romantic movement in Europe was really quite otherwise and more sentimentally motivated, more curiously and less sensually developed. In Europe, Christianity has intensified the naturally anthropomorphic tendencies of Aryan Greece, by asserting that man alone is endowed with a soul : the more remote and dangerous grandeurs of nature, not directly amenable to human exploitation, were not considered without disgust, or as ends in themselves, before the eighteenth century. Even then, the portrayal of nature was deeply coloured by the pathetic fallacy ; Blake had only too good reason when he " feared that Wordsworth was fond of nature."

But from a Zen point of view, every manifestation of the spirit is perfect in its kind, the categories are indifferent ; all nature is equally beautiful, because equally expressive, consequently the painting of a grasshopper may be no less profound than that of a man. The use of plant and animal forms as symbols goes back to very early origins in sympathetic magic : even in Asia the full comprehension of animal life represents the result of a long evolution in which the most ancient ideas survive side by side with the expressions of an ever heightened sensibility. The two points of view, symbolic and sympathetic, are clearly seen together in a statement on animal painting made by an anonymous Chinese critic in the twelfth century :

" The horse is used as a symbol of the sky, its even pace prefiguring the even motion of the stars ; the bull, mildly sustaining its heavy yoke, is fit symbol of earth's submissive tolerance. But tigers, leopards, deer, wild swine, fawns, and hares—creatures that cannot be inured to the will of man—these the painter chooses for the sake of their skittish gambols and swift, shy evasions, loves them as things that seek

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the desolation of great plains and wintry snows, as creatures that will not be haltered with a bridle nor tethered by the foot. He would commit to brush-work the gallant splendour of their stride ; this would he do, *and no more.*"

The greater part of this exactly corresponds to Zen ; the same point of view is clearly presented in India still earlier, in the poetry of Kalidasa and in Pallava animal sculpture. Centuries before this the sacredness of animal life had been insisted on, but mainly from an ethical point of view.

When at last Zen thought found expression in scepticism—

> "Granted this dewdrop world be but a dewdrop world,
> This granted, yet . . . "

there came into being the despised popular and secular Ukiyoye art of Japan. But here an artistic tradition had already been so firmly established, the vision of the world so *approfondi*, that in a sphere corresponding functionally to that of the modern picture-postcard—Ukiyoye illustrates the theatre, the Yoshiwara, and the *Aussichtspunkt*—there still survived a charm of conception and a purity of style that sufficed, however slight its essence, to win acceptance in Europe, long before the existence of a more serious and classical pictorial art had been suspected.

In Asia, where at least a partial nudity is too familiar in daily life to attract attention, the human figure has never been regarded as the only or even the most significant symbol of the spirit. Works indeed exist in which the power and dignity of man and woman are sublimely rendered. But even in India, the nude body is seen in art only when and where and to the extent that the subject requires it, never as a study undertaken for its own sake ; even the dancer is more, not less, fully clothed than her sisters. On the other hand, India has always made free and direct use of sexual imagery in religious symbolism. The virtue (*virya*) of Isvara as Father of the world retains the connotation of virility, and is expressed in art by the erect *lingam* ; the infinite fecundity of the Great Mother is boldly asserted in litanies and images that emphasise her physical charms in no uncertain terms. The representation of "fertile pairs" (*mithuna*) originally conceived only as general instigations of increase, later more lyrically treated, is characteristic of Indian art from first to last ; many mediaeval temples are outwardly adorned with series of reliefs adequate to illustrate the whole art of love, which has never in India been regarded as derogatory to the dignity of man. Already in the Upanishads the physical ecstasy (*ananda*) of union is an image of the delight of the knowledge of Brahman : "As a man united to a darling bride is conscious neither of within nor without, so is it when the mortal self embraced by the all-wise Self knows neither what is within nor what without. That is his very form" (*Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, IV, 3, 21). In the later iconography, both Hindu and Buddhist, the Two-in-One of manifested Godhead is imitated in the pure ecstasy of physical forms enlinked, enlaced, and enamoured.

In Vaisnava mysticism, the Indian analogy of Zen, the miracle of human love reveals itself in poetry and art not merely as symbol, but as felt religious experience ; the true relation of the soul to God can now only be expressed in impassioned epithal-

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amia celebrating the nuptials of Radha and Krishna, milkmaid and Divine bridegroom. She who for love renounces her very world, honour and duty alike, is the very type of Devotion. Moreover, the process of thought is reversible: in the truly religious life, all distinction of sacred and profane is lost, one and the same song is sung by lover and by monk. Thus the technical phraseology of Yoga, the language of bhakti, is used even in speaking of human passion: the bride is lost in the trance (*dhyana*) of considering the Beloved, love itself is an Office (*puja*). In separation, she makes a prayer of the name of her Lord; in Union, "Each is both." The only sin in this kingdom of love is pride (*mana*). In Rajput painting the life of simple herdsmen and milkmaids is denotation (*abhidha*), the Sports of Krishna connotation (*laksana*), the harmony of spirit and flesh the content (*vyanjana*). These, operating in the media available, have made the paintings what they are. If we ignore these sources of the presented fact, the painting itself "unique in the world's art," how can we expect to find in the fact any more than a pleasant or unpleasant sensation—and can we regard it as worth while (*purusartha*) merely to add one more to the abundant sources of sensation already available? Art is not a mere matter of aesthetic surfaces.

* * *

If we are to make any approach whatever to an understanding of Asiatic art as something made by men, and not to regard it as a mere curiosity, we must first of all abandon the whole current view of Art and Artists. We must realise, and perhaps remind ourselves again and again, that that condition is *abnormal* in which a distinction is drawn between workmen and artists, and that this distinction has only been drawn during relatively short periods of the world's history. Of the two propositions following, each explains the other: viz., those whom we now call artists, were once artisans; and, objects that we now preserve in museums were once common objects of the market place.

During the greater part of the world's history, every product of human workmanship, whether icon, platter, or shirt button, has been at once beautiful and useful. This normal condition has persisted longer in Asia than anywhere else. If it no longer exists in Europe and America, this is by no means the fault of invention or machinery as such; man has always been an inventive and tool or machine-using creature. The art of the potter was not destroyed by the invention of the potter's wheel. How far from reasonable it would be to attribute the present abnormal condition to a baneful influence exerted on man by science and machinery is demonstrated in the fact that beauty and use are now only found together in the work of engineers—in bridges, aeroplanes, dynamos, surgical instruments, the forms of which are governed by scientific principles and absolute functional necessity. If beauty and use are not now generally seen together in household utensils and the business man's costume, nor generally in factory-made objects, this is not the fault of the machinery employed, but incidental to our lowered conception of human dignity, and consequent insensibility to real values. The exact measure of our indifference to these values is reflected in the current distinction of Fine and Decorative art, it being required that the first shall have no use, the

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second no meaning : and in our equivalent distinction of the inspired Artist or Genius from the trained workman. We have convinced ourselves that art is a thing too good for this world, labour too brutal an activity to be mentioned in the same breath with art ; that the artist is one not much less than a prophet, the workman not much more than an animal. Thus a perverted idealism and an amazing insensibility exist side by side ; neither condition could, in fact, exist without the other. All that we need insist upon here is that none of these categories can be recognised in Asia. There we shall find nothing useless (Fine Art) on the one hand, nothing meaningless (Decorative or Servile Art) on the other, but only human productions ordered to specific ends ; we shall find neither men of Genius nor mere labourers, but only human beings, vocationally expert.

Asia has not relied on the vagaries of genius, but on training : she would regard with equal suspicion " stars " and amateurs. She knows diversities of skill among professionals, as apprentice or master, and likewise the products of different ateliers, provincial or courtly : but that anyone should practise an art as an accomplishment, whether skilfully or otherwise, would seem ridiculous. Art is here a function of the social order, not an ambition. The practice of art is typically an hereditary vocation and not a matter of private choice. The themes of art are provided by general necessities inherent in racial mentality, and more specifically by a vast body of scripture and by written canons ; method is learnt as a living workshop tradition, not in a School of Art ; style is a function of the period, not of the individual, who could only be made aware of the fact of stylistic change and sequence by historical study. Themes are repeated from generation to generation, and pass from one country to another ; neither is originality a virtue, nor " plagiarism " a crime, where all that counts is the necessity inherent in the theme. The artist, as maker, is a personality much greater than that of any conceivable individual : the names of even the greatest artists are unknown.

" What are the paintings even of Michelangelo compared with the paintings on the walls of the cave temples of Ajanta ? These works are not the work of a man ; ' they are the work of ages, of nations.' " Nor would the biographies of individuals, if they could be known, add anything to our understanding of the art. What the East demands of the artist, as individual, is integrity and piety, knowledge and skill, let us say order, rather than peculiar sensibilities or private ideals, for man is a responsible being, not merely as maker, but also as doer and thinker.

In all these ways the freedom and dignity of the individual, as individual, have been protected in a way inconceivable under modern conditions. Where art is not a luxury, the artist is on the one hand preserved from those precarious alternatives of prestige or neglect, affluence or starvation, which now intimidate " artist " and labourer alike. Where ability is not conceived as an inspiration coming none knows whence, but rather in the same light as skill in surgery or engineering, and where eccentricity of conduct is neither expected of the artist nor tolerated in him, he is enabled to enjoy in privacy the simple privilege of living as a man among men without social ambition, without occasion to pose as a prophet, but self-respecting, and contented with that respect which is normally due from one man to another, when it is taken for granted that every man should be expert in his vocation.

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APPENDICES

I. A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF INDIAN AESTHETIC
By K.C. Pandey

II. THE SYMBOLIC ASPECT OF FORM
By Alice Boner

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A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF INDIAN AESTHETICS

By K. C. Pandey

From the Indian point of view, aesthetics is the science and philosophy of the independent arts–the arts which present the Absolute in sensuous garb in such a way that their products serve as the effective mediums for deriving experience of the Absolute for such connoisseurs as can have the desired subjective experiences. It is a science for the following reasons:

(i) It approaches works of art from the objective point of view, analyzes the whole into its constituents, distinguishes them from one another, points out their relations, classifies not only the arts on the basis of the material employed in creating products, but also on the basis of a set of distinctive characteristics common to a particular work of art or a group of such works.

(ii) It psychologically deals with the experience that a work of art arouses, analyzing (a) the personality of both artist and aesthete, so as to show the characteristic features which distinguish it from that to which the ordinary everyday experience is due; (b) the process through which the aesthetic image develops in the mind of the beholder and the operation of different mental faculties at various levels of aesthetic experience takes place: sensuous, imaginative, identific, cathartic and transcendental.

(iii) It logically accounts for the difference of the aesthetic judgment from judgments of right, wrong, dubious, illusory, and recognitive.

(iv) It discusses the ends of art, hedonistic, pedagogic, and mystic, and shows how and when they are realized.

(v) It distinguishes artistic activities responsible for the products which are judged to be imitative, illusory, or ideal.

(vi) In the context of the literary arts, poetry and drama, it approaches the problem of meaning from the psychological point of view and differentiates from one another the conventional or symbolic, the secondary, the intentional, and the suggested.

(vii) It defines a work of dramatic art, analyses its stages and action, divides the means of dramatization employed in it into sixty-four parts, and classifies the leading figures in poetry or drama according to their characteristic emotive bents and activities.

It is a philosophy (a) because the experience that a work of art arouses is accounted for in terms of various schools of philosophy and (b) because the authorities on the three arts, poetry, music, and architecture, hold that art presents the Absolute as conceived by them. Accordingly there are three schools of philosophy of the independent arts, based on the conception of the Absolute as Conscious Freedom, as Sound, and as Organic Unity, technically called ***Rasa-Brahma-Vada, Nada-Brahma-Vada,*** *and* ***Vastu-Brahma-Vada.***

THE MEANING OF ART. The Sanskrit word for Art is ***Kala.*** *Etymologically it means that pleasant human activity which is characterized by close observation, calculation, contemplation, and clear expression. Such an activity is necessary for the production of a work of art no less than for an aesthetic experience for it.* ***Kala*** *is also used for a work of art insofar as it is a product of such an activity*[1] *and is a source of aesthetic pleasure.*

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*THE CLASSIFICATION OF ARTS. In the Vedic age no classification of arts seems to have been made. Every art was considered to be useful. About the fourth century B.C., the arts were first divided into two classes, (i) basic and (ii) dependent (**Antara**), by Pancala, who was a predecessor of Vatsayana, the author of the **Kama-Sutra** (fourth century A.D.). He speaks of 582 arts, sixty-four of which he recognizes to be basic and the rest (518) to be dependent. There have been controversies about this classification.*

*Bharata, the author of the **Natya-Sastra,** seems to have divided the arts into principal and subordinate ones. For he holds that all arts occupy a subordinate position to the dramatic inasmuch as they find their due place in it.[2] But he also regards even the dramatic art to be mainly useful, insofar as it is only a means of imparting moral instruction, of giving mental rest to those who are afflicted with pain, sorrow, or fatigue, and of acquisition of fame, religious merit, and long life.*

*Subsequently, however, some commentators on the **Natya-Sastra,** influenced by the conception of **Rasa** as the Absolute in the **Taittiriya** Upanisad (Raso vai sah II, 7), recognized dramatic art, which presents **Rasa** as an Absolute art. The first person to do so was Bhatta Nayaka (ninth century A.D.). Following this trend, the exponents of two other arts asserted them to be Absolute. For King Boja of Dhara (1018-60 A.D.), dealing with architecture in **Samrangana Sutradhara,** presents the absolutist view of architecture (**Vastu-Brahma-Vada**); similarly King Samga Deva (1210-47 A.D.) in his work on music, the **Sangita Ratnakara,** talks of the Sound-Absolute (Nada-Brahma-Vada). Thus finally three arts, poetry (including drama), architecture, and music, were recognized as absolute, independent, or **Svatantra,** as distinct from dependent, useful or **Upayogini.** Hence aesthetics fom the Indian point of view is concerned with these three arts only.*

*CONTRAST WITH HEGEL. This classification is slightly different from that of Hegel, who recognizes two more arts, sculpture and painting, to be absolute or fine. The reason for this difference seems to be the religious influence on the conception of architecture in India. According to the **Saivagamas** and subsequent works like the **Samarangana Sutradhara,** the **Manasara,** etc., sculpture is the most essential part of architecture insofar as architecture is conceived to be an organic unity like a human body with an enlivening soul in the form of the sculptured deity installed in it. And sculpture in India is not a product of the chisel and brush. For sculpture, like painting and poetry, aims at presenting the state of mind, the basic tendency, through physical expression, particularly that of the eyes. This tradition persists till today.*

Philosophy is an outgrowth of religion. Accordingly, with the growth of various systems of philosophy, the installed deity was looked upon as a symbol of the highest philosophical principle that grew out of a particular religion. Therefore the view that the installed deity is the soul of a work of architecture implies that the deity is the most important part or aspect of the work and that the aesthetic experience from it cannot be complete unless this most important element figures in it and unless every other constituent is seen in relation to it, the architectural work being the expression or the objectification of it, much as the human organism is that of the enliwening soul. Hence sculpture and painting are not regarded as separate, independent, or fine arts in Indian tradition.

THE BASIS OF THE CLASSIFICATION OF INDEPENDENT ARTS. The independent arts have been classified on the basis of senses of perception to which their works are addressed. And two senses only, those of sight and hearing, are recognized to be aesthetic, for these are the only senses which leave their objects of perception in their complete independence, do not require them to be exclusively for a particular percipient, suffer them to be common objects so as to mark them as the senses of touch and taste, and do not

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*presuppose the process of dissolution in their objects as does the sense of smell. They are the only senses which make possible the contemplative relation, as distinct from the appetitive, and, consequently, the universalization of the subjective and the objective aspects which is so necessary for the aesthetic experience. On the basis of these senses the works of the independent arts and the arts themselves, have been divided into three classes: those addressed (i) to the sense of sight, (**Drsya**), (ii) to that of hearing (**Sravya**) (iii) the both (**Drsya-Sravya**). To the first class belongs architecture, with sculpture and painting as its subordinate arts, to the second belong poetry and music, and to the third drama, which is nothing but the highest form of poetry. The reason for classifying poetry separately from music seems to be that although both are addressed to the sense of hearing at the sensuous level of experience, yet at the cathartic level, the sensuous element is completely eliminated from poetic experience, whereas it is always an essential aspect of the musical.*

*THE EVOLUTION OF AESTHETICS AS A SCIENCE: At the earliest stage of the evolution of aesthetics as a science, the **Rigveda**, the earliest extant book in India, drew the attention of the analysts. The earliest trace of such a study we find in the **Nirukta** of **Yaska** (fifth century B.C.) who puts together several phrases from the **Rigveda** as instances of smile (**Upama**), quotes an authority, Gargya, giving his definition of simile and his view that in simile the standard of comparison can be either superior or inferior to the subject of comparison. He points out that the simile has four constituent elements–subject of comparison, standard of comparison, common property, and the word expressive of the idea of similitude: and that simile can be either complete with all the aforesaid constituents, or elliptical, lacking in one, two, or three of the said factors. Panini (400 B.C.) lays down rules for various forms of expression, expressive of similitude, in the Vedic as well as classical language. By the time of Panini at least two works or dramaturgy had been written, one by Silali and the other by Krsasva, and he refers to both. Badarayana (400 B.C.), the author of the Vedantasutra, knew not only simile but metaphor also. Katyayana (300 B.C.) wrote a work on dramaturgy or poetics. He is quoted by Abhinavagupta to show which meters should be employed in presenting the physical features of different characters.*

*The earliest available work that gives a very detailed account of the results of the analytical approach to the literary art is the **Natya Sastra** of Bharata (500 A.D.). But it had many predecessors. Besides the two to which Panini refers, there were three more: (i) **Brahma Bharata**, (ii) **Sadasiva Bharata**, (iii) **Adi Bharata**. We know them from references in the works of later writers, and fragments of them have been discovered.*

*The inscription of **Rudra Daman** at Junagadh, inscribed in 150 A.D., refers to the poetic qualities, clarity, sweetness, brilliance, magnificence, to figures of speech and two forms of poetic composition, prose and verse. Thus it appears that, in the second century A.D., the analytical study of poetry was at a fairly advanced stage.*

THE ANALYTICAL APPROACH TO POETRY: The poetry is recognized to be the highest art. The following account of the constituents of poetry, discovered through objective analysis, shows clearly what aesthetics as a science is from the Indian point of view:

THE LETTER AS THE LIMIT OF ANALYSIS: The artistic medium of poetic presentation is articulate sound. The letter as a unit of such sound is the smallest constituent that the objective analysis of a poetical work reveals. It shows (i) that the letters are distinguishable from one another because of the distinctive sounds and different effects, pleasant or otherwise, which they produce on the sense of hearing; (ii) that they enhance the excellence of poetry because of their harmony with the suggested emotion; (iii) that recurrence of the same or similar sounds in a composition constitutes various figures of speech, such as alliteration, and therefore has ornamental value in beautifying the piece where they occur; (iv) that their

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*distinct sounds have exciting, softening, or neutral value (**Dipta, Masrna, Madhyama**) to the mind or heart of the hearer; (v) that the use of words containing letters of a particular sound quality helps in the arousal of a particular aesthetic emotion; (vi) that even a letter can suggest an emotion; (vii) that often a skillful choice and arrangement of words made up of letters which have a particular visual form in writing makes a written verse look like a sword, a drum, a lotus, and so on, because of the visual shape of letters and thus gives rise to pictorial poetry[3] (**Citrakavya**).*

*THE DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF POETRY: Poetry is a set of well-connected meaningful words, which constitute, as it were, its body. But such a set is also used for the ordinary communication of ideas in daily transactions as well as in scientific and philosophical works. Metrical form cannot be looked upon as the distinguishing mark of poetry, for in India even the works on technical subjects are written in that form. A question therefore arises: What is it that distinguishes poetry from common speech? If it is said to be the beauty or attractiveness of words and meanings, a further question arises: What is it that makes them attractive? It cannot be said that attractiveness is due to the presentation of an attractive set of events, or of a complete aesthetic configuration technically called **Rasa**, for a detached stanza presenting a single idea is also called **poetry**. The reply is that it is the presence of what is subsumed under six poetic catagories and the absence of defects counted under the fourth that distinguishes poetry from common speech.*

*POETIC CATEGORIES. There are seven poetic categories under which the results of the analytical approach have been placed: (i) the characteristic (**Laksana**), (ii) embellishment (**Alankara**), (iii) quality (**Guna**), (iv) defect (**Dosa**), (v) style (**Riti**), (vi) suggestion (**Dhvani**), (vii) aesthetic configuration (**Rasa**). Of these the first five are objective and the last two are subjective.*

*I. THE CHARACTERISTIC. If we confine ourselves to the available literature, we may say that the idea of the characteristic marks of poetry first arose in the mind of Bharata. To him they are distinct from embellishments, figures of speech or **Alankaras**. While the former are in the body itself, like slenderness of waist or plumpness of breasts, the latter are external additions, like necklace and bracelet. The conception is based on the analogy of lines in the shape of a lotus, flag, or disc on palm or sole of foot, which are to a palmist unmistakable marks of greatness of man. (**Mahapurusalakasana**) and because of which he can recognize the man as such even in the absence of all external paraphernalia. Bharata definitely distinguishes thirty-six such marks, adding that there are many more which a close analytical study can reveal. Some of the important ones among them are: compactness, brilliance, parallelism, reason, persuasiveness, excellence, logicality, wit. His pupil, Kohala, and followers discovered more. King Bhoja traced out many more and in his **Sarasvati Kanthabharana** declared them to be sixty-four.*

II. ALANKARA OR EMBELLISHMENT: The analytical approach to literary art was made from two points of view, that of the dramaturgist and that of the poet. The former distinguished between characteristic and embellishment. And Bharata admitted only four embellishments or figures of speech, though he mentioned thirty-six characteristics as stated above.

*The poets, however, abolished this distinction, holding that a mark is a mark whether in the body, like lines in the palm or added to it, like a badge. Thus Bhamaha (600 A.D.) refers to the view about the externality of embellishments as that of "others" (**Pare**) and discusses forty-three embellishments, maintaining them to be characteristic marks of poetry and including in his list most of those mentioned by Bharata. He did so because he took the word **Alankara**, not in the sense signified by the English expression **figure of speech** as it is usually translated, but in its literal derivative sense, meaning "that which gives sufficiency" (**Alam karoti**). In the context of poetry, therefore, according to him, it means "that which gives sufficiency to a composition to be classed as poetry". Taking the word in this sense, he identified*

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*characteristics (**Laksana**) with embellishments (**Alankara**) and asserted the general characteristic of all types of poetry to be a twist or turn (**Vakratva**), that a poetic genius gives to words and meanings. He held this twist to be the characteristic of all embellishments.*

Bacon seems to echo this very idea when he says that the poet distorts nature. As an empiricist he means by nature the material world, the sum total of all that is perceptible. He therefore finds that works of poetic art present the objects of nature, not in the form in which they are directly preceptible through the senses, but in such a form as is different from what exists in nature though similar to it, so that it cannot be thought to be simply a copy of what is already there in nature, by faithful presentation of nature as it is. On the contrary, he holds that poetry is distorted nature.

Poetic art has a definite place in his system. He recognizes many faculties of the sensitive or corporeal soul, including memory, imagination, and reason, which are responsible for the production of history, poetry, and philosophy respectively. Thus genius, according to him, is that aspect of mind which is responsible for production of poetic works and is nothing but imagination that distorts nature (puts her out of the shape in which she is directly perceptible) by twisting or drawing exprenionistically joining at pleasure things which can never come together in nature.

This distortionistic view of poetry points out the general characteristic not only of the works of poetic art but also of all arts. For art, whether useful or fine, is a human activity which uses the products of nature as materials for artistic productions. And every artistic activity gives a shape to a product of nature, which is different from that which nature produces. A hairdresser curls hair. A young man with a "heroic" tendency, twists and turns up the ends of his moustache. A sculptor chisels a stone out of the shape in which he finds it in nature. But this twisting, or putting an object of nature out of shape, may lead to productions which are grotesque, wild, or eccentric. The standard by which the poetic value of an imaginative construct may be judged, therefore, is recognized to be the aesthetic experience that it arouses in an aesthete.

TYPES OF TWIST (VAKRATVA): The poet perceives more in nature than the senses of the non-poet can grasp. He selects from nature what possesses extraordinary beauty for poetization, for the adding of the elements which his imaginative capacity points out. An object or a set of objects of nature is to a poet what a smooth surface is to a painter.[4] *Therefore, just as a painter paints on that surface which has requisite smoothness, so a poet poetizes only that which already possesses natural beauty. And just as a painter is very careful in the preparation and choice of paints in the painting of a particular point, so a poet is extremely dilligent in the choice of linguistic means in the presenting of a particular idea. The "twist" is recognized to be of five types by Kuntaka (1000 A.D.), a distinguished follower of Bhamaha. It can be under the influence of the exponents of the suggestive power of language: (i) of expression, (ii) of meaning, (iii) of sentence, (iv) of a topic, and (v) of the whole composition.*

*THE WIDER MEANING OF ALANKARA: Subsequently, however, the particular derivative meaning of the word **Alankara** was ignored, and it was used in the popular conventional sense of ornament or figure of speech. Consequently the number of **Alankaras** continued to increase from the forty-three recognized by Bhamaha, who amalgamated the characteristics, embellishments, and some of the qualities, to one hundred twenty-four in the hands of Appayya Diksita (sixteenth century, A.D.), and gave rise to excessively ornamented poetry.*

*III. QUALITY (**GUNA**): Quality belongs to a body, or a substance. Words and meanings constitute the body of poetry (**Sabdarthasariram kavyam**). A constituent part of them, therefore, are poetic qualities, about whose number, function, and relation there is a difference of opinion. Bharata admitted ten and recognized them to be means of presenting **Rasa**: (i) sweetness (**Madhurya**), (ii) forcefulness (**Ojas**), (iii) perspicutiy (**Prasada**): such clarity in thought and expression as leads to the*

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*arousal of unexpressed ideas, (iv) the pun (**Slesa**), (v) smoothness (**Samadhi**) proper adjustment of ascent (high-flown language) and descent (simple language), (vi) magnificence (**Udarata**) fanciful grouping of words, (vii) clearness of meaning (**Arthavyakti**), (viii) uniformity (**Samata**) - sameness of style, (ix) softness (**Saukumarya**) - absence of harshness, (x) polish (**Kanti**) or brightness of style.*

*Bhamaha accepted the first three only. The reason is obvious. Some of them can be classed as verbal figures of speech: the pun, for instance; others may be looked upon as mere absence of harshness and vulgarity, both well-recognized defects. As an exponent of the view that the embellishment, the distorted utterance (**Vakrokli**) is such a characteristic (**Laksana**) as gives sufficiency to a composition to be recognized as poetic, he therefore subsumed many of the above qualities under embellishment. Vamana (eight century A.D.) denied that the poetic embellishments are of primary importance, held that poetry is like a picture, and asserted that the comparative importance of embellishments and qualities in it is the same as that of colours and lines in a picture. Just as the beauty of a picture depends on the lines of which the sketch is made, while paints simply enhance it, so the beauty of a poetic production depends upon the poetic qualities, and embellishments simply enhance it. Accordingly he accepted all the ten qualities mentioned by Bharata.*

Ananda Vardhana (ninth century A.D.) realized the force of the argument against the acceptance of the ten qualities: asserted that the distinction between qualities and figures of speech is that though both add to the charm of poetic composition, the former belong to the whole, like the beauty of a girl, whereas the latter pertain to a part only, like a bracelet on an arm; and accepted only the three qualities which Bharamaha had recognized.

*IV. DEFECT: Defect (**Dosa**) is that which diminishes the excellence, attractiveness, or value of a work of art. According to Bharata, poetic defects are ten: circumlocution, superfluous expression, irrelevancy, want of significance, unrefined expression, tautology, want of synthesis, illogicality, hiatus, slang. Mammata (11th century, A.D.) in his **Kavya** Prakasa, Ch. VII, deals with poetic defects in every great detail.*

*V. STYLE (**RITI**). Style is the mode of arranging words according to their sound and meaning values so as to present the poet's ideas effectively in harmony with the central theme: something like arranging different parts of the human organism in a picture.[5] There are four recognized styles, based on the study of poetry of different regions: Berar, Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat, and, named after them, are called **Vaidarbhi, Gaudiya, Pancali,** and **Lati**. (i) Vaidarbhi is characterized by sweetness, abounds in sounds sweet to the ear, and has very few or no compounds. (ii) The characteristic of the **Gandiya** is presentation of a heroic disposition in the forceful sounds in long compounds and alliterations. (iii) **Pancali** is marked by the use of neutral sounds, and by fewer and smaller compounds than are found in **Gaudiya.** (iv) **Lati** is simply a mixture of the two styles, **Vaidarbhi** and **Pancali.***

*Vamana studied the styles exclusively from the point of view of the qualities. He found **Vaidarbhi,** to possess all the ten; **Gaudiya** only two, forcefulness and brilliance; and **Pancali** also only two, sweetness and tenderness. He raised the question: What is the soul of poetry? for the first time and declared that style is the soul of poetry (**Ritiratma kaayyasya**). For a proper understanding of his analysis of styles it is important to take into account his wider conceptions of qualities which include even the presentation of **Rasa,** e.g. brilliance (**Kanti**).*

DIVERGENCE EXPLAINED: Abhinavagupta noted the divergence of views about the characteristics, embellishments, and quality, referred to in the preceding sections, and consequently asserted that it is impossible to draw a very clear line of demarcation among them. The distinction which Bharata drew, however, is based on the analytical study of the process of the externalization of poetic vision as well as of that of apprehension. That it has an educational value[6] is assumed because of its utility in educating a

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would-be poet as regards the steps by which he should proceed in creating a work of art and a connoisseur as regards the various elements which he ought to take into consideration in judging a work of art. Abhinavagupta attempts to show the mutual relation and comparative importance of these elements by analogy with an architectural work. The characterstics are like walls in the absence of which no architectural work can have being. Qualities are like smooth plaster, and embellishments or figures of speech are like painting drawn on the smooth surface. The defects may belong to any of the above three. And style is nothing but the manner of organizing matter in such a way as to give due place to the qualities and embellishments.

POET'S VIEWS OF SUGGESTION (DHVANI) AND AESTHETIC CONFIGURATION (RASA). The early poets, recognising embellishment to be the most essential element of poetry in general and being concerned with its objective analysis, admitted that the subjective categories, suggestion and aesthetic configuration, are only elements of embellishment in their conception of embellishments, called **Rasavat, Preyas, Samadhi,** *etc. They denied the purely subjective nature of the suggestion and the basic mental state, the central fact in aesthetic configuration, and held that both of them are known through inference and, therefore, are objective. This gave rise to the psycho-philosophical approach to literary art.*

II. SUGGESTION (DHVANI) AND VII: AESTHETIC CONFIGURATION (RASA). Suggestion, i.e., the suggested meaning, is called **Dhvani** *because it is connected with the symbolic or conventional meaning just as the echo is with the original sound of a bell tolled in a temple. Just as the rise of the echo depends on accoustic conditions, which are due to the construction of the temple, so does the rise of the suggested on the subjective elements which constitute the personality of the aesthetic individual.* **Dhvani** *is also used for conventional symbol and conventional meaning from which the suggested meaning arises, for the power of word that is responsible for the arousal, and for the competition that contains such a meaning. Similarly, the word* **Rasa,** *which signifies aesthetic configuration, is used for the aesthetic object as well as for the aesthetic experience got from it because the constituents of both are the same. As found in a drama, they may be classified as follows:*

(i) The situation with a focal point, which the central figure, the hero of the piece, faces;

(ii) the basic emotion that it arouses in the hero, i.e. in the human focus of the situation.

(iii) transient emotions which arise from the basic emotion, like waves from the sea, and merge back into it.

(iv) physical changes, which are consequent on the rise of an emotion, both involuntary, such as horripilation, the blush, and voluntary, like the movements of hands and feet.

The aesthetic object is not a mere juxtaposition of these constituents; it is not a mere jumble. The precise nature of the relation of the constituents is conceived on the analogy of a juice that an expert cook prepares by putting together in due proportion various things of distinct tastes, sweet, bitter, astringent, sour, and saltish, in water, cooking them properly, and then filtering them. The analogy implies that the constituents of the aesthetic configuration have to be well refined; they have to be in right proportion and have to be so related that they present a unity which has an aesthetic value, distinct from that of each constituent separately. It means that the aesthetic experience at the emotive level is not the experience of a basic emotion in isolation from other constituents of the configuration, but in harmonious union with them and that it is poetic genius alone which can conceive such a configuration and present it in such predominantly suggestive language that a connoisseur can get the same experience from it as that presented by the poet.

From the standpoint of the exponents of the suggestive power of language, the basic emotion is the central fact, the soul of the aesthetic configuration, and the latter without the former is like a body without the enlivening principle. They maintain that while other constituents may be presented by the conventional,

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secondary, or intentional power of language, basic emotion and complete aesthetic configuration, ***Rasa,*** *do not admit of presentation by means of the three aforesaid powers; and that they can be only suggested. Hence the suggestive power of language. And, therefore, suggestive words and meanings are the means that help a genius in realizing his end, which is the presentation of complete aesthetic configuration. For, as a careful study of the works of great poets and dramatists reveals, the fact is, that from them we get the emotive aesthetic experience, though no word signifying the emotion is included.*

OPPOSITION TO THE THEORY OF SUGGESTIVE POWER: The opposition to the theory of suggested meaning and, therefore, to the suggestive power of language, may be divided thus:

(i) The suggested meaning is subjective. It does not have objective symbol standing for it in artistic presentation. Its consciousness depends upon a rare subjective condition. Therefore, it is but natural for those who approach poetry from the objective point of view and try to analyze it into its constituents, to deny the suggested element in it. The objectivists represent the first class.

(ii) Opponents of the second class asserted that, in order that it may convey some meaning to the hearer, a word presupposes an established convention as to its significance. As there is no convention regarding the suggested meaning, no word can serve as its vehicle. Hence, even though, for the sake of argument, a different type of idea, called suggested, may be admitted, it cannot be communicated, because communication presupposes the familiarity of the hearer with the idea to be communicated and with its symbol. In its absence, the words fail to arouse the intended meaning.

(iii) Others, who have studied poetry more carefully and analyzed the received experience introspectively, are forced to admit the suggested, but being under the influence of the older school, which admitted embellishment to be the most important element in poetry, recognize it only as a subordinate element. They represent the third class.

(iv) But when such instances as have the suggested element without any figurative content are pointed out, they assert that this meaning is secondary. These belong to the fourth class.

(v) When it is shown that in these instances the characteristics of the secondary meaning are missing, they say that such a meaning is known through inference. This leads to the philosophical approach to works of art and to a psychological analysis of the process leading to aesthetic experience and of the experience itself.

(vi) When the untenability of the view that aesthetic experience is got through inference is shown, they have recourse to the intentional power of language and maintain that the suggested meaning is the intentional.

The theory of "a kind of inference" in accounting for pleasure from comedy, which is a presentation not of the beautiful but of the odd, was maintained by Aristotle; and some learned contemporaries, like Professor I.A. Richards, seem to maintain that the awareness of emotive meaning in the listener is due to the inference of the indicated from the indicator, the sign.[7] *And the distinction of the suggested meaning from the intentional (****Talparyartha****) is very subtle. Let us, therefore, consider if the consciousness of the basic emotion can be accounted for in terms of inference.*

THE THEORY OF INFERENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF AESTHETICS. A drama presented on stage is an audio-visual type of work of art. It is most suitable for the purpose in hand. The first exponent of the theory of inference in the context of aesthetics, Srisankuka (ninth century A.D.), therefore, introduced it to explain the emotive aesthetic experience derived from a dramatic presentation. In this connection the following facts have to be remembered:

Inference is a logical process, not by perception but through the instrumentality of a mark, of ascertaining, that a thing possesses a certain character because of our knowledge of relation of invariable concomitance between the two. For its validity it presupposes the consciousness of the factuality and objective being of the sign at a particular time and space.

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Is it possible to infer the basic emotion of a hero of drama on stage from his actions, utterances, and perceptible physical changes, such as the expression of his eyes? The first thing to ascertain is whether the basis of inference, the objectively perceived hero, Lear, Hamlet, Rama, or Dusyanta, is the real historical person to the inferer of feelings and emotions in him

THE THEORY OF IMITATION. Imitation seems to have been the earliest principle of artistic production. It was followed in Greece so successfully in presenting dramas on the stage that a certain type of spectator could be deluded, as is clear from the statement of the sophist, Gorgias: "Tragic representation is a deception which turns out to the honour of both, of him who deceives and of him who is deceived, in which it is shameful not to know how to deceive oneself and not to let oneself be deceived. Imitation, as a principle of presentation of a drama on stage, was well recognized in India about the time of Panini as is clear from the following:

A scene, presenting the killing of Kamsa by Krsna, is being staged. The stage-manager is directing it personally. Some one asks, "What is the stage-manager doing?" The reply is: 'He is directing the killing of Kamsa by Krsna.' The objection to the use of the present tense is raised: 'Kamsa was killed long ago. How can the use of the present tense be grammatically justifiable in reference to the action presented on the stage? Then the reply is: 'It is justifiable because in the intellectual apprehension, in the imaginative grasp of the stage presentation, the actors shine as the original historical characters.[8]

THE REJECTION OF THE IMITATION-ILLUSION THEORY BY THE FOLLOWERS OF THE SANKHYA: The imitation-illusion theory was rejected, because it cannot explain the essential nature of the aesthetic experience which an aesthetic person derives from dramatic presentation, because it cannot account for the consciousness of the basic emotion. The reason is obvious. If the stage presentation, because of its successful limitation of the historical event, creates such an illusion as to delude the spectator into taking the artificial to be real, his experience logically will be illusory, and will arouse the real. Hence the sight of a tragedy on stage should not be different from the actual event and should be painful. But it is not so. Furthermore, imitation is admitted to be imitation, because it lacks the most essential aspect of that which is imitated: an imitation diamond is an imitation of a diamond, because it does not have the most essential aspect, the quality of a diamond. Therefore if an actor be admitted to imitate a historical character, he will have to be admitted to be lacking in the most essential aspect of the original, the basic emotion. The inference of an emotive meaning from his utterances would be a wrong inference. It was for such reasons that Plato, who accepted the imitation-illusion theory of art as propounded by his predecessors, refused art a place in an ideal republic. The theory that art creates illusion and that the experience from a work of art is illusory, was maintained by Locke also. But if art simply imitates and deludes, any independent value of its own must be denied it. For, as pointed out by Plato, what art does (by imitation) is already done, and done much better by nature.

Isvarakarsna (third century A.D.) in his **Sankhya Karika**, *therefore, held that the actor does not imitate, but so identifies himself with the hero conceived by the dramatist that he becomes what the hero is, much as the subtle body becomes what the gross body is.*[9] *Just as the subtle body (***Suksma Sarira***) becomes a man or an animal, so does the actor become the character that he represents. According to this view, therefore, the aesthetic experience is not erroneous. But the question arises: Why is experience from a tragic presentation not painful? is answered by pointing out that the spectator is completely deindividualized*[10] *inasmuch as he is free from the two qualities* **Rajas** *and* **Tamas**, *and, therefore, from the selfish and purposive attitude and determinative cognitive activity and that he consequently remains unaffected by feelings, pleasant or painful, which are due to the purposive attitude and to a consequent individualistic relation with the object of experience. The spectator is simply aware of the aesthetically presented, much as*

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*the **Purusa**, the self, free from all individualizing conditions, is of the **Prakrti** that has ceased to evolve and is free from all that delimits.*

*THE VEDANTIC APPROACH: The distinction which the followers of the **Sankhya** drew between the empirical and the aesthetic experiences has been accepted by all subsequent thinkers. They admit that both are deindividualized. But they assert that the subject is not merely devoid of feeling while still blissfully aware of the objective aspect of the total aesthetic experience. The Vedantin explains this as follows: Even the **Sankhya** admits that, in the awareness of nature referred to above, the subject (**Purusa**) is not entirely free from all the three attributes or qualities (**Guna**). Though he is entirely free from **Rajas** and **Tamas**, to which action and ignorance are respectively due, he still has the **Sattva**, to which all knowledge is due. For in the absence of it, the objective knowledge under reference will be impossible.*

*While the **Sankhya**, hesitantly as it were, admits the touch of **Sattya** with **Purusa**, the Vedantin emphasizes it. The latter's conception of **Sattya** is different from that of the former. To him the predominant and perfectly pure **Sattya** as related to the self, which is free from limitations of individuality, is "bliss" (**Ananda**). Accordingly he asserts that aesthetic experience is blissful experience.*

*He raises the fundamental questions: How and why are the subject and object universalized? And how is the universalized subject related to the universalized object? But he answers them by merely assuming two powers of poetic language in addition to those which were generally recognized: (i) **Bhavakatya**, the power which frees the aesthetic object from all relations in which an object stands at the empirical level and which thus universalizes it; (ii) **Bhojakatya**, the power which throws the two qualities of the aesthete, **Rajas** and **Tamas**, into the background and brings **Sattya** to the forefront; and (iii) **Bhoja**, a cognitive activity, which is responsible for simple distinterested awareness of the unversalized object by universalized subject. He distinguishes cognition at the aesthetic level from that at the empirical. All actions, whether physical or mental, are due to **Rajas**. Psycho-physical responses spring from desire. At the aesthetic level, however, **Rajas**, cannot function, because what is presented is universalized and therefore cannot arouse any desire and psycho-physical responses in the subject, who also is universalized. Hence it is relegated to the background and **Sattya** predominates. Consequently **Tamas** becomes inoperative, like darkness in the presence of light. To account, therefore, for the simple awareness of aesthetic object at the aesthetic level, a separate cognitive activity is assumed.*

*Thus aesthetic experience, according to him, is akin to the mystic experience of the Brahman, because it is a conscious state of the subject free from all limitations, and, therefore, free from all volitional, psychological, and physical activities. It is not identical with mystic experience of the **Brahman**, however, because it is a limited experience, though an experience lacking the consciousness of limitation at the time when it arises, because the aesthetic object is universalized. The result is that the aesthetic experience, according to him, is the experience of the universalized aesthetic object by universalized subject in the state of bliss: **Sattya** predominates and the other two qualities, **Rajas** and **Tamas**, are inactive.*

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE ASSUMPTIONS: Bhatta nayaka (tenth century, A.D.) attempts to justify the assumption of the two powers of language as follows: The question is: 'Is the emotion experienced objectively in the focus of the presented situation or subjectively?' In the former case, as pointed out in the course of the criticism of the inferential theory, the experience from tragic presentation should be painful, and subjective experience of the emotion is not possible. For an emotion arises because of the personal relation with the focus of a situation that the experiencing individual faces. Such a relation is not possible with the character that is presented as the cause of an emotion in the hero of the piece. For instance, suppose that Rama is presented to be in love with Sita. How can love arise in the spectator from such a scene? For Sita has not the same stimulative value for him as she has for Rama. The spectator does not look upon Sita as an

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object of love. In fact, the historical and religious associations which surround the personality of Sita will prevent the rise of such an emotion from such a presentation. Nor can it be said that she is looked upon simply as a beautiful lady. For the ideas with which she is associated by the dramatist as he presents her poetically will stand in the way of one's own object of love as stimulated by the presentation.[11] *Such an assertion is not in consonance with the experience that an aesthete has. Nor can it be said that the aesthete emotion is suggested. For the same objections raised against the rise of emotion will also stand against its being suggested. For these reasons the aforesaid powers of language were admitted to explain aesthetic experience of emotion.*

*ABHINAVAGUPTA'S PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH: Bhatta Nayaka's assertion that in aesthetic experience at the emotive level both the subject and the object are deindividualized (**Sadharanikrta**), is unchallengeable. It is accepted by Abhinavagupta. But he rejects the assumption of two powers of poetic language and psychologically accounts for universalization.*

THE TRIADIC RELATION. Abhinavagupta was a rational mystic. He knew that in religious contemplation (for instance, when a religious-minded person contemplates what he is devoted to), the object figuring in his consciousness is not simply a copy of a statue which he places before himself, but something essentially different from it, something that the mind constructs with the help of what is present to optical sense, something in the determinate apprehension of which the present statue or picture is only a medium. Therefore, he asserts that in the case of aesthetic experience of an emotion, the focal point of the situation is only a medium which helps the imaginative mind to have free play in the world of imagination and to experience the emotion. The relation between the situation, particularly its human focus, presented on the stage and the emotion that the actor or the spectator, facing it, experiences, is not that of cause and effect. For the situation is related neither to the actor nor to the spectator as such, in the manner in which it was to the historical character being represented. Aesthetic experience is different from ordinary everyday experience which is due to diadic reltion of subject and object, because it is got, not through the objective perception of the presented, but through subjective realization of that which is not objectively presented, but to which the artistic medium points: it is due to a triadic relation.

*THE ESSENTIAL CONSTITUENTS OF AESTHETIC PERSONALITY: Aesthetic experience presupposes a personality different from the ordinary. Its essential constituents are taste (**Rasikatva**), aesthetic susceptbility (**Sahrdayatva**), the power of visualization (**Pratibha**), the intellectual background (**Vyutpatti**), a contemplative habit (**Bhavana** or **Carvana**), the capacity to identify, and the psycho-physical condition necessary for a particular emotive aesthetic experience.*

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE: Indian aestheticians recognize five levels of aesthetic experience: (i) sense, (ii) imagination, (iii) emotion, (iv) catharsis, (v) transcendency. These explain psychologically how the spectator rises from one level to another and show how the dramatic technique employed in the presentation helps in producing the emotive experience, which consists of the subjective realization of a diindividualized basic mental state in harmonious union with the situation, the mimetic changes, and the transient emotions, which are due to identification with the deindividualized focus of the situation.

The first requisite for such an experience is the attitude of the spectator. The mental process that leads to the experience begins with the rise of the attitude of play at the time one decides to go to the theatre, abandons the practical attitude, and expects only a short life in the ideal world of the poet's imagination.

This attitude is absolutely necessary for the effect that Sanskrit dramatists aim at producing in the spectator's mind by the general introduction to drama, which consists of a musical prayer; and dialogue between the stage-manager and his assistant referring to the drama that is going to be staged; its author and

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some important actor or character; vocal music depicting the season, etc; and the special introduction, in which one or more characters of the main plot appear and talk to give an idea of the seed of circumstances from which the business arises and to inspire the necessary attitude. The latter compares well with the introductory scene in Shakespeare's **Julius Ceaser** *where the poet informs us of the circumstances in which the action begins; gives a clear idea of the fickleness of the commoners, which is, as it were, the seed, responsible for the development of action; and inspires the idea of the uncertainty of everything that depends upon so uncertain a thing as the attitude of commoners.*

The psychological effect of such an introductory procedure on the spectator is obvious. As he sits down, looking at the outer side of the stage, or at something else, and expects the commencement of the drama, the curtain rises and shows him a set of characters singing a prayer-song in the mood of religious devotion. His wandering attention is immediately fixed, and the other ideas which were haunting him just before tend to disappear. Soon afterwards the stage manager comes in with his companions. His references, preparing the spectator to receive what is coming as a work of art, and not as a fact of ordinary world of nature, further determine his attitude, incipiently stir up the basic mental state with which he is to face the entire presentation, and arouse in him the tendency to identify with the hero and to perceive that presented through his eyes and ears. And the music, which is introduced towards the end of the general introduction, brings about a state of self-forgetfulness. This general introduction is very important for producing the necessary psychological conditions for aesthetic experience.

IDENTIFICATION: Self-forgetfulness means freedom from all elements which constitute individuality. It is a precondition of identification with the hero and of the subjective experience of an emotion identical with the one that is presented in the hero. It is a prerequisite of aesthetic enjoyment in which, in the words of Teoddar Lipps:[12] *'We feel ourselves in others and we feel others in ourselves: In others, and by means of them, we ourselves feel happy.'*

As the aesthetic person sits in a state of self-forgetfulness, the hero appears. No element of the actor's personality is distinctly perceptible. The figure to all intents and purposes is historical. The time and other factors, however, do not permit the recognition of the historic person in the actor. The presentation is made up of conflicting elements. But the human mind is so constituted that once it is drawn to an object and feels pleasure in it, it ignores all that is dull and conflicting in it. The mind that appreciates a rose in a garden ignores the thorn, at least its thorny nature, though both are apprehended simultaneously. Furthermore, time is not a necessary element of all knowledge. Our knowledge of the invariable concomitance of the two, from one of which we infer the other, is free from the element of time. Hence the aesthete's mind ignores the three conflicting elements in the presented–time, the place, and theterritory to elect their Legislative Assemblies. Thus identification, the substitution of the aesthete's personality by that of the hero, takes place.

*THE OPERATION OF THE CONSTITUENTS OF AESTHETIC PERSONALITY IN CONSTRUCTING THE WORLD OF IMAGINATION: Identification means being inspired with the purpose of the hero. This leads to formation of incipient bodily and mental attitudes and of a disposition towards the rest of what is presented, which are like those of the hero; and to the seeing and hearing of all that is going on on the stage, as if it were through the hero's eyes and ears. Consequently, because of the operation of the constituents of the aesthetic personality, the aesthete evaluates the entire situation in which the hero is placed exactly as does the hero himself (i) Taste not only keeps the attention fixed on what is presented, but also does not allow any idea to occur that might arouse the consciousness of individuality to come in. (ii) The stage has its own limitations. What meets the eye or the ear does not fully present the poetic vision. The matter presented is highly suggestive; unless the suggested elements figure in consciousness, aesthetic experience is bound to remain incomplete. Another subjective prerequisite of aesthetic experience, therefore, is the operation of the power of visualization (***Pratibha***). It spontaneously and*

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instantaneously calls up from the unconscious all such ideas as are suggested, unifies them with the given, and thus builds up the beautiful world of imagination.

This imaginative construct is different from that which arises in determinate cognition, inasmuch as the latter is determined by the purposive attitude of the percipient, but, in the former, the aesthetic attitude, which is characterized by freedom from all individual purposiveness, is the determining factor. It presupposes vast and rich intellectual background. For the unconscious is only what was once experienced.

*THE EMOTIVE LEVEL AND AESTHETIC SUSCEPTIBILITY (SAHRDAYATVA) AND CONTEMPLATIVE HABIT (BHAVANA OR CARVANA): The world of imagination is not that which the spectator's own imagination builds up, but that which figures in poetic vision and is presented in poetic language, which serves as a means of picturing up an identical vision through sympathetic interpretation. Similarly, the emotion which an aesthete experiences in it is not that which arises because of his personal reaction to what figures in imagination, but that which the poetic language suggests, because he is possessed of aesthetic susceptibility (**Sahrdayatva**).*

Experience of such an emotion presupposes experience on the part of the spectator in ordinary life of emotive situations similar to those presented on the stage, for in its absence aesthetic presentation will have little meaning. It depends upon close and careful study of drama and poetry and frequent visits to the theatre, much as does mystic experience depend upon deep and regular concentration and contemplation.

*The conception of aesthetic susceptibility is very closely connected with the heart. In fact the Sanskrit word for the person who poses it is **Sahrdaya**, which means one whose heart is such as gets into the condition similar to that of the focus of the presented situation or of the poet at the sight of an aesthetic presentation. And Dhananjaya (974-995 A.D.) distincly refers to the various conditions of heart, which coincide with the experience of different emotions at the emotive level of aesthetic experience. According to him, the heart blooms, broadens, tosses, and moves violently in the aesthetic experience of the emotions of love, heroism, disgust, and anger, respectively.*

Emotive aesthetic experience does not persist throughout the presentation, because the aesthetic image of the objective aspect on which it depends develops slowly. It is a climatic experience which takes place when situation and action reach the stage of full development, when the basic emotion rises to the highest relishable pitch.

*But the experience at the emotive level is the experience of emotion not in isolation from other constituents of the aesthetic cofiguration, but in harmonious union with them. The question, therefore, arises: How can such a union be possible since the various constituents are experienced in succession and each sinks not the subconscious soon after its experience? The answer is that they are called back from the subconscious to the conscious level by contemplative habit (**Bhavana** or **Carvana**).*

*The contemplative process is conceived on the analogy of the chewing of the cud by an animal, a cow, for instance (**Romanatha**). It consists in calling back the experiences which an aesthete formerly had from an aesthetic object, but which, because they came in succession, sank into the subconscious; in reflecting over what has been so called back; in holding it up before the mind's eye; in grasping the whole, which, because of the mutual affection of the experiences for one another, appears as something different from what each isolated experience was in separation. Thus an aesthetic experience at the emotive level consists in the objective experience by a subject that is free from all limiting conditions, of the entire aesthetic configuration, including the universalized basic emotion and the accompanying condition of the heart, as a unified whole.*

THE LEVEL OF COMPLETE CATHARSIS: Catharsis means purification. According to medical analogy, it means the removal of an excess, the unwanted, the undesirable, the injurious. On the analogy of religious catharsis, on which Aristotle based his conception of catharsis to explain the ethical

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effect of tragic presentation on stage, it means removal of the excessive element in passion or emotion so as to bring it to a mean. Similarly, the conception of catharsis which Hegel upholds to distinguish tragic from ordinary fear on the basis of difference in the object to which it is related, includes the idea of purification, the removal of the unwanted. The reply to the question: What is that is purified and what is it that the purificatory process removes?[13] *may be stated as follows:*

The object to which the fear that the spectator experiences is related is not the individual who performs a terrible deed, but the might of absolute right, divine justice, the deindividualized will. It is presented in a tragedy to rise out of the natural state and to find itself within itself, through negation of negation, through negation of wrong or crime which is its own negation insofar as it is the negation of right as such. This negation of wrong is the negation of individuality from that which opposes it. Tragedy, therefore, in presenting the punishment of wrong, purifies what it presents from the element of individuality and, consequently, presents the absolute might of right, or divine justice. And tragic fear is purified insofar as its object, the might of absolute Right, is purified to the extent that it is purged of the element of individuality which is opposed to it and in which the origin of evil lies. The same holds good for sympathy because it is an accordant feeling with the claim of ethcal power. Thus catharsis, according to Hegel, means ***deindividualization.***

From the Indian point of view also catharsis means purification, the removal of the elements which constitute the individuality of the subjective and objective aspects of aesthetic experience, such (as has been stated earlier) as time, place, and the historicity of that which is presented. But at the level of complete catharsis, the object of fear is not deindividualized, but totally eliminated. Here the central fact of the configuration, the basic emotion, figures before the mind's eye in its purity, with all the associated ideas of situation completely eliminated from it, because of the peculiarity of the presentation and because the recollective bent of the contemplative habit has been substituted by the eliminative, to get at the most essential aspect. Consequently, the fear, which is so universalized that it is free from a relation even to its object appearing in the consciousness of the spectator, who is free from all elements of individuality, affecting his heart as if penetrating it, and, being visualized so as to seem to be dancing as it were before the eyes, is the objective aspect of the aesthetic experience at the cathartic level.[14]

*THE TRANSCENDENTAL LEVEL. The transcendental level is recognized as the highest. In it the duality of subject and object disappears through intense introversion and utter disregard of the basic mental state. At this level, the basic mental state sinks back into the subconscious. Thus the final stage in aesthetic experience, according to Abhinavagupta, is that in which there is the experience of the "supreme bliss" (**Paramananda**); and even the basic mental state, awakened by dramatic presentation, sinks into the subconscious. Aesthetic experience, therefore, in its final stage belongs to the level of **Vyatireka Turivatita,** in which all objectivity merges in the subconscious, and the Subject, the Self, shines in its Ananda aspect.*

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2. *Bharata, **Natya Sastra,** Choukhamba Sanskrit Series (Varanasi, 1956) Chap. I vv. 107-113.*
3. *Mammata, **Kavya Prakasa** (Calcutta, 1886), Chap. IXV . 8.*
4. *Kuntaka, **Vakrokti Jivita,** (Calcutta, 1928), Chap. III, vv. 3-4, Comm.*
5. *Visvanatha, **Sahity Darpana** (Calcutta, 1916), Chap. IX, v. 1.*
6. *Abhinavagupta, **Abhinava Bharati,** Gaekwad's Oriental Series (Baroda, 1934), II, Chap. XVI, v. 1, Comm.*
7. *C.K. Odgen and I.A. Richards, **Meaning of Meaning.** (London, 1927) pp. 233-234.*
8. *Nagesa Bhatta, **Vaiyakarana Siddhanta Laghu Manjusa** with a commentary by Sabhapati Upadhyaya. adarsha Sanskrit Granthamala (Ghazipur, 1929), pp. 207-208.*
9. *Gsvara Krsna, **sankhya Karika** (Poona, 1934), v. 42.*

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10. ***Ibid*** *v. 65.*
11. *Abhinavagupta,* ***Dhvanvaloka Locana,*** *Choukhamba Sanskrit Series (Varanasi, 1940), Chap. II, v. 4, Comm.*
12. *B. Croce,* ***Aesthetic*** *(New York), 1953, p. 407.*
13. *Hegel,* ***Philosophy of Right*** *(London, 1896), p. 96.*
14. *Abhinavagupta,* ***Abhinava Bharati,*** *Gaekwad's Oriental Series (Baroda, 1934), I, v. 34, Comm.*

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THE SYMBOLIC ASPECT OF FORM

By ALICE BONER

*"Symbolism and imagery (**pratika, pratibimba,** etc.), the purest form of art, is the proper language of metaphysics," says A.K. Coomaraswamy in **A New Approach to the Vedas.** Sacred art of any kind is art attached to and dependent on a metaphysical doctrine, from which it receives not only its subject-matter, but also rules for the composition of images and the treatment of form. Such art does not exist for the sake of its own achievements, but for the sake of realisation of transcendent Truth. It has no other purpose than to be the exponent of a doctrine and a support to religious and spiritual aspiration. It does not therefore deal with the varied aspects of phenomenal life for the sake of their own emotional and pictorial interest, but only in the sense in which they are mirrors of divine Reality. It does not dwell on the transient, accidental, elusive aspect of things, but on their essential being. It strives to transfigure the material world of forms and to transpose it into the world of "Ideas", from which it is derived.*

Since sacred art, then, will never attempt to give a sensory illusion of the material texture of this world, it will never use the naturalistic, realistic form-language of profane art. In order to seize upon the spiritual aspect of things, it is bound to ignore all that is material, accidental, irrelevant in appearances, so as to fall back upon their archetypal configuration. This involves transfiguration of phenomenal entities into essential qualities, in the sense of Platonic "Ideas" or the Tantric "Tattvas". Form thus qualified may retain only an analogical resemblance to factual appearance, but since it is truer metaphysically, it will acquire the potential symbol-value.

For the purpose of analysis, Hindu art gives the clearest and most substantial evidence of the working principles of such a symblic form language. Hindu art has always been governed by transcendental vision and has achieved the rare miracle of integrating all living form into geometrical and architectural patterns, without depriving them of movement, organic vitality and intense expressiveness–rather, on the contrary, it enhances them. The sculptures inside and outside Indian temples with all their plastic exuberance, are no mere decorations, but integral structural parts of the architecture. Their meaning as well as their position and form are governed by the same laws that govern metaphysical plan of the temple.

If the most adequate medium for the transcription of metaphysical conceptions is found in mathematics and geometry, conversely, the ultimate archetypes of all living form can be reduced. Geometry thus provides a plane of refraction, as it were, between the world of essential being and the world of formal manifestation, where each contacts the other as a ray of light touches its reflection on the surface of water. It is not surprising, therefore, that geometrical figures play so important a part in every system of sacred symbolism, and that they determine the symbolic character of form as the natural language for sacred imagery.

Geometrical forms are essentially functional, not in a mechanical, material sense, but transcendentally. They are not abstractions but living images of cosmic forces. They are the graph of definite processes, of laws and energies, that act alike on the sensible and on supersensible levels. Quite apart from mathematical definitions, it is this specific morphology of geometrical figures which is the basis of all symbolic form, whether it be pure, or qualifying and circumscribing natural form.

It may be helpful to make a rough analysis of the essential properties of the fundamental geometrical forms and their basic symbolism in order to show, how, in traditional art, they take the place of naturalistic form in the figuration of divinity or of any transcendental conception.

*The **sphere** is a body of perfect cohesion, fullness and unity, determined by a centre equidistant from every point of its circumference. Its energy is centripetal when it is indrawn towards the centre, and centrifugal when it expands towards the circumference. In Greek metaphysics the sphere represents universal manifestation, the totality of Existence, emanating from the One, the immanent central Principle and finally*

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Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Khajuraho.

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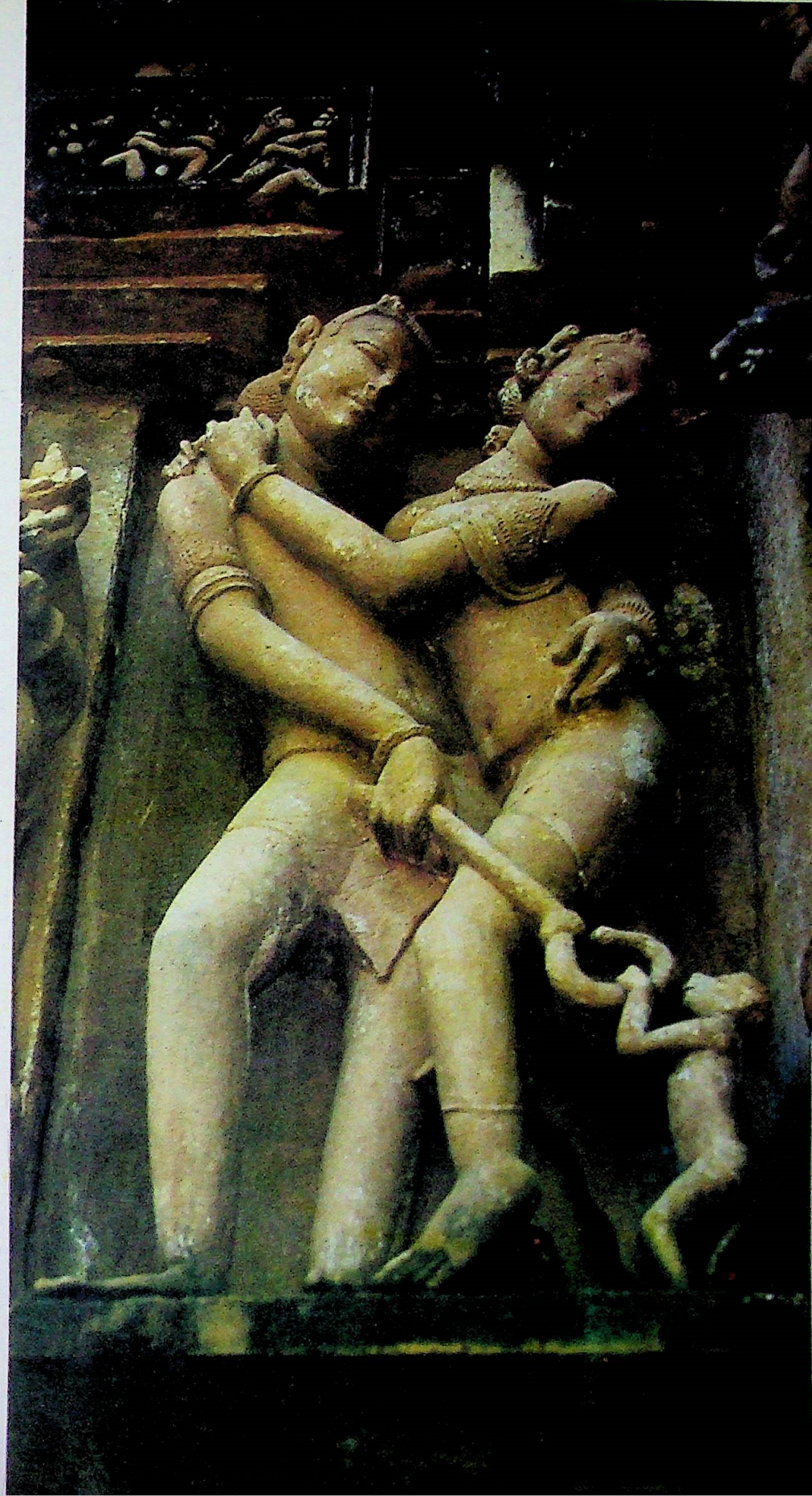

The sculptured bands on the exterior walls of Khajuraho.

A woman frightened of a monkey clings to her lover. Khajuraho.

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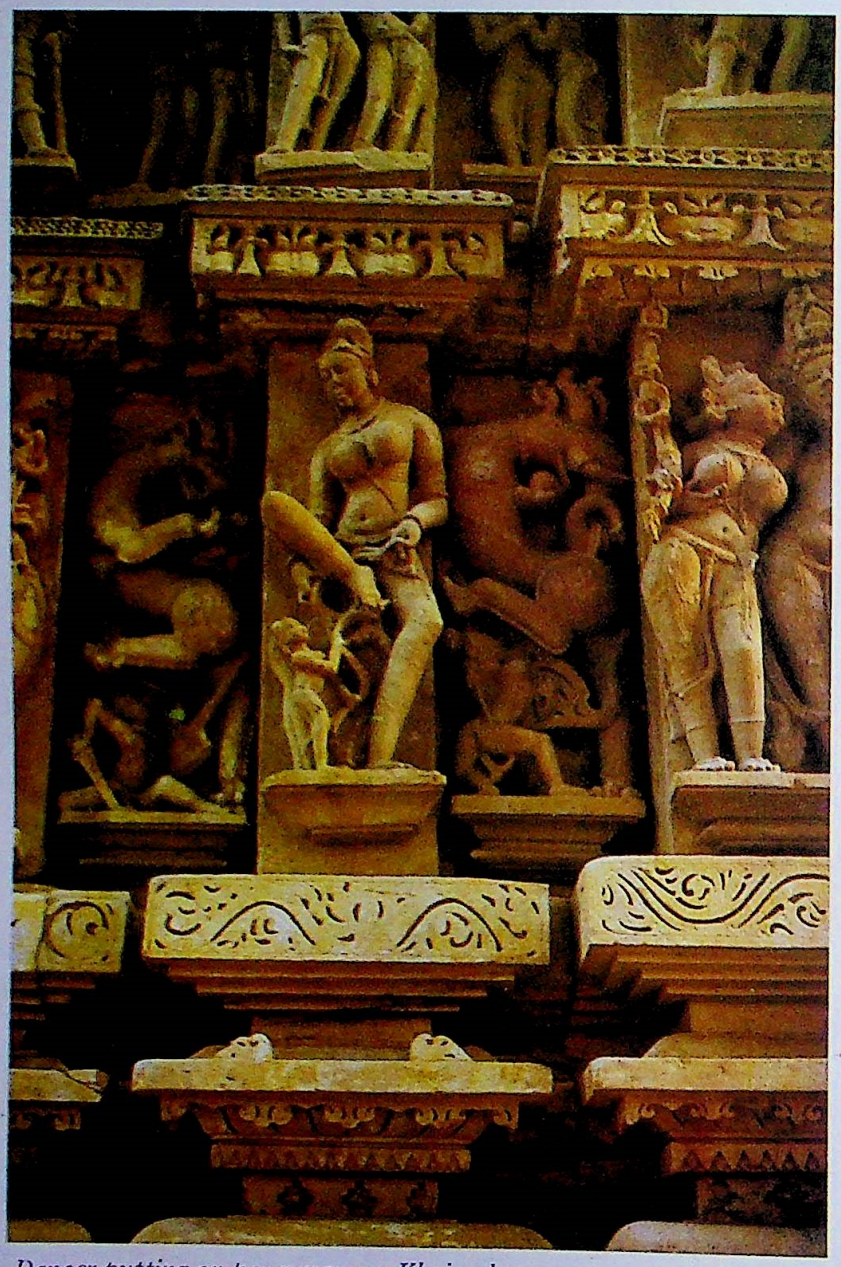

Dancer putting on her gungroos, Khajuraho.

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reabsorbed into It. It is the form of God: ***Sphoera cujus centrum omnibus, circumferencia nillibi.***

The circle *is a line recoiling upon itself and devouring, as it were, its own beginning, eternally revolving around its centre. In Vaisnavism and in Buddhism, the circle in the form of a* ***Cakra*** *(wheel) represents the revolution of the Year, of Time, the cycle of existence, cosmic or human, the Eternal Law, according to which everything proceeds into manifestation and is again withdrawn from it.*

The spheroid *can be considered as a sphere in the process of pulling itself asunder into two separate units, each with its own centre. It represents disruption of unit, division of wholeness for the sake of multiplicity. Therefore the sphereoid stands for the World-egg, the incipient duality of* ***Purusa*** *and* ***Prakrti*** *which leads to manifestation.*

The cube *is the only entirely inert form, without dynamic stress inherently or spatially–firm, rigid and motionless. The cube and the sphere, its correlate, represent, among the* ***tattvas, Prthvi*** *(Earth), the grossest and densest element, the stable and solid support of all life.*

The cylinder*, an eminently dynamic form, is a compact sheaf of parallel energies, pushing in both directions along its longitudinal axis into limitless extension. In Buddhism the vertical cylinder, either in the form of the* ***Dharma-stamba,*** *the Pillar of the Law supporting the Wheel of Existence, or as the stem of the Lotus that supports the Buddha in glory, stands for the central axis of the universe. This very conception is expressed in Saivism by the same form, but under a different connotation. Here it is the erect Lingam of unlimited extension which supports the universe. Brahma as a swan flying up into heaven, and Vishnu as a boar digging down to the centre of the earth, try in vain to find its end. The axis of the universe is also symbolised as the flagstaff before the central shrine of a temple, as the* ***Sannyasi's staff, and in man, the microcosmus,*** *as the spinal column, the* ***Meru-danda.***

The ***spiral,*** *when it coils inward in narrowing circles, suggests a gathering up of forces, recoil, concentration, involution. When it coils outward in widening circles it suggests procession, expansion, evolution. The spiral in the form of the* ***Sankha*** *(Conch), the* ***Salagrama*** *(fossilised shell) and the* ***Sesanaga*** *or* ***Ananta*** *(serpent of eternity) always refers to Visnu-Narayana, the all-pervading, creative Principle from which universes are put forth and into which they are re-absorbed.*

The triangle, *the first of rectilinear figures to define dimension, has also the strongest inner cohesion, for each of its sides is connected with both the others, each is in opposition to and complementary with the others: their balanced tension is one of unassailable unity in plurality. Leaving aside all the complex and subtle symbolism implied in Trinity, the three in one, we shall only point out its purely plastic symbolism. The equilateral triangle, standing on its base, dominated by the vortex represents* ***Purusa,*** *the immanent Principle. The triangle standing on its base is also a symbol of Fire (****Agni****), as an upward tending, involving force, returning to the Centre. Standing on its apex, with extension dominating it, represents Sakti, Maya, the power of manifestation. Similarly, when the triangle has one of its sides raised into the third dimension and from a plane figure becomes a body, a tetrahedron, it stands for* ***Kriya Sakti,*** *the power of operative manifestation in space and time.*

Not only have geometrical figures and bodies their morphology and meaning, but so have lines. A line is either straight or curved, but when it is curved, it presents an indefinite variety of characteristics.

*The straight line, the shortest possible movement from one point to another, is direct, rigid, insensitive, dividing space, but never forming it, itself spaceless and limitless. In Tantric symbolism the straight line represents Jnana-Sakti, direct perception of pure Consciousness (****Cit****). Jnana-Sakti is also figured in the form of a sword, the sword of pure Knowledge, Discrimination, which cuts across the veil of illusion. To express this conception it is essential that the sword should be straight, not curved. The same symbolism is*

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implied in the spear or lance, the attribute of Karttikeya, as a combined power of Yoga and Jnana.

The curved line, whatever the degree of its curvature, is always creative, formative, it always delimits or encloses a portion of space and thus originates shape. A curve can be flat or full, relaxed or full of tension. A double curve, bending first in one direction and then in the other, suggests a restless forward drive, progressing by alternation from one opposite to another, like the movement of a snake. In the Tantras the double curve in the form of the **Sankusa** *(elephant-god) is the symbol of* **Iccha-Sakti,** *pregnant with the desire for manifestation - the movement that leads from pure, transcedent being to embodiment in matter.*

Surfaces, being only portions of geometrical bodies, have no symbolical meaning in themselves, but they necessarily partake of the character of the body to which they belong. A convex surface, partaking of the nature of the sphere, expresses growth, progression, fullness, expansion, radiation of energy from within. A concave surface, on the contrary suggests an indrawing of energy, regression, reabsorption and collapse. In a flat surface these tendencies balance each other, so it is neutral like a straight line.

It should not be forgotten, that the directions in space also, have their own symbolical meaning, which greatly qualifies the proporties of geometrical form. Verticality makes for dynamism, aspiration, growth and firmness, while horizontality makes for heaviness, quietness and insertness. And upward diagonal slant has sway, action, aggresiveness, while a downward slant suggests fall, defeat, submission, relinquishment. A vertical column is an eminently active form, whereas a column lying horizontally looses all stress and becomes inert. A truncated cone standing on its broad end weighs downward and expresses gravitations, stability, earthbound immobility. Standing on its narrow end it becomes light and appears to be soaring upward. All things rooted in the earth, all plants and trees, stand on their broad ends, while creatures that walk about, stand on the narrow end of their legs. Compare the difference in the feeling given by an Egyptian temple, where massive pillars taper from their broad bases to their lotus-capitals and that given by a Gothic cathedral, where the columns expand above into ornamented capitals and the flying arches of the vault.

These examples may make clear what is the nature of the elements that go to the making of sacred imagery. Though in figurative art these fundamental geometrical principles cannot be applied pure, but only in an approximation, still they determine form within the composition and the shape of images.

The operation of the artist who works on esoteric lines is never psychological, emotional or anecdotal, but purely formal. He feels form in its purest essence, not for what it represents, but for what it signifies. The intrinsic character of the geometrical pattern imprints its meaning on the sculpture:

Visnu as the supporter of the universe, is not represented as an athlete with bulging muscles carrying a heavy globe on his shoulders, but simply in the form of a vertical column, standing rigidly erect, with straightened legs and arms close to the body, holding his four attributes symmetrically on either side and vertically above each other.

Visnu in **Yoganidra,** *when he is at rest between the withdrawal of one universe and the emanation of the next, is represented lying horizontally on the coils of the Sesnaga, floating on the Ocean of* **Pralaya.** *His horizontality is combined with a spiral movement of the Naga: he is inactive between involution and evolution.*

The Buddha after his enlightenment (after he has become one with supreme Truth) is not represented with rapturous expression or gestures, but seated crossleged in supreme calm, all senses withdrawn, his entire figure inscribed into the upright triangle, the symbol of **Prakasa,** *the Principle of Light. Similarly the victory of the spirit over matter in the Buddha's head is not expressed by any psychological device, but by the predominance of the forehead and by the complete relaxation expressed in the perfect oval of the face.*

The principles laid down for the Indian image-maker in his study of anatomy show very clearly how the traditional artist studied form, not in its material likeness, but in its functional expression. Since all objects

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in this world partake, in their whole frame or in their several parts, in this system of fundamental form, and since the lower lying organisms are necessarily nearer to these archetypes, they are considered in their turn as symbols and similes for the more highly organised and complex forms. Their analogies and comparisons give a striking image of the living action of every part of the body: The head is described in the likeness of an egg, with the skull as its broad and the chin as its smaller end, for the egg, like the skull, is a shell containing soft matter of indefinite potentiality. The neck with its circular folds is likened to a conch, not only in its form, but as the seat of the voice. The torso of a man is compared with the head of a cow, the upper part broad and hard, the lower part soft and narrow, with folds above the snout as above the belly. The arms are likened to the trunk of an elephant, because of their downward tapering form, their flexibility and their power of grasping. The legs are compared with the inverted trunk of the banana tree, with which they share their shape and their supporting power. The eyes are described in various ways, according to their cut, their motion and their expression - a **safari** *fish when they are restless and agile, as a* **khanjana** *bird when they are dancing and playful, as a* **parval** *when they are drowsy, as a lotus petal when they are half closed in bashfulness. (See A.N. Tagore, Indian Iconography,* **Modern Review**, *Vol. XV, No. 3).*

And just as anatomy is expressed in simile, Divinity itself is expressed in an analogy form, character and movement. Such transfigured form-language cannot be approached either discursively or sentimentally, for it directly touches our inner awareness of cosmic correspondences. Like notes and intervals in music, it awakens a response in us from the irrational depths of our being. Like music, it uses form in rhythmic sequences, in a subtle interplay of parallel and opposite movements, resulting in a closely knit harmony, which instead of evolving in time, spreads itself out in space. In these free rhythms is echoed the rhythm of the universe. In **The Transformation of Nature in Art** *p. 179 note, A.K. Coomaraswamy says: In these passages the spiritual significance of rhythm in art is plainly asserted. Conversely they are also of interest in connection with the problem of the origin of art, all rhythm corresponding in the last analysis to cosmic rhythms.*

When such inner knowledge of form was still alive, it must have been a language in the truest sense of the word, and understood by all. It was a transcription of the doctrine into visual images, and at the same time a commentary which would in many ways be more clear, direct, and impressive then the written word. The fact that figurative art can show simultaneously elements which in transcendental Reality are co-existent, but which words can only explain in a sequence, makes it often more powerful and comprehensive then verbal exposition. On the battlefield of Kurukshetra, Lord Krishna himself, having failed to move Arjuna to action by his words, resorted to an image in order to convey the fullness of his meaning and showed him his Cosmic Form. In his **Elements of Buddhist Iconography**, *p. 35, A.K. Coomaraswamy quotes the words of Kobo Daishi: 'The Reverend Divine informed me that the secrets of the Shingon sect could not be conveyed without the aid of pictorial representation.'*

This language of image addressed itself to a people whose vision was not dulled by a one-sided bookish education, but whose senses were alert and whose minds were capable of grasping the message of form. They did not live divorced from contact with nature, shut up in factories and cheerless prison houses of cement and steel. They lived with their bare feet on the bare ground, their heads bare under the open firmament. They lived in constant touch, physically and emotionally, with all the elements of nature, with the powers of earth and heaven. To their eyes and minds infinite cosmic backgrounds were ever present. The feeling was nourished and the imagination kindled by the subtle harmony of forms in nature, and they knew the laws that produced such harmony. These people handled the raw materials of the earth, not machines and machine-made articles, and in obedience to the natural laws of harmony created objects of beauty for their gods and for themselves. Their knowledge of form was thus born of experience, renewed every day and gathered up through

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generations, and it gave truth, substance and plasticity to their thinking and feeling. It endowed them with creative imagination which was capable of translating any natural form into an analogy, into a symbol of deeper significance. Out of such unity with the forces of the cosmos 'pratika' was created and understood.

From all this it will be readily inferred that sacred art in any tradition, as long as it was alive, could have amounted, as it is so often gratutiously assumed, to be a mechanical repetition of preestablished patterns. Even if sacred imagery had necessarily to adopt certain formula with respect to the lineaments, proportions, colours and attributes of divine figures, these formula were never arbitrary. They rested on the transmitted experience of transcendent vision, a source from which flow innumerable rivers of realisation. Artistic realisation can no more result from thoughtless acceptance of patterns, than spiritual realisation can follow from merely conventional worship. No valid or vital work can be accomplished unless the worker plunges himself into that primary source and There visualises the object of his desire.

Only when he has integrated himself emotionally, intellectually and spiritually with his object, will it assume visible form in his inner self. From the depth of his consciousness he may then bring forth the forms that will best express the aspect of divinity he was seeking.

Sanskrit texts dealing with the making of images, always emphasise the necessity of inner visualisation. In ***The Hindu View of Art*** *A.K. Coomaraswamy quotes from the Agni-Purana: 'The imager, on the night before beginning his work, and after ceremonial purification, is instructed to pray: Oh thou Lord of all the Gods, teach me in dreams how to carry out the work I have in mind.' And from Sukracarya: 'The lineaments of images are determined by the relation which subsists between the adorer and the adored.' He adds that the practice of visualisation, referred to by Sukracarya, is identical in worship and art.*

If such inner visualisation of divine aspects was all possible, it was because these craftsmen knew, through meditation and experience, the exact relationship between concept and form, between a principle and its visible expression. Through intellectual and emotional awareness of these correspondences, they were able to compose the various elements of an image into that particular harmony, which would, most comprehensively, mirror the chosen aspect of the Divine.

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CHRONOLOGY

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CHRONOLOGY

Dravidian civilisation	4000 B.C.	(Approximately)
The Indus civilisation, of which remains have been found at Mohenjo-Daro	3500-2500	"
		"
Indo-Iranian separation	2500	"
Aryan invasions	2000-1500	
(Borghaz-koi inscriptions, Cappadocia, *ca.* 1400)	1500 (or earlier)	*Rig-Veda.*
	800 (about)	*Brahmanas.*
		Oldest Upanishads.
		Caste system developing.
SAISUNAGA DYNASTY	600	
Bimbisara	530	
Kunika Ajatasatru	515	Parkham Statue, Mathura.
	540-468	Mahavira.
	563-483	Buddha.
Darius in the Punjab	516	
	500-200	Vedic *Sutras*, later Upanishads, early forms of Epics; Buddhist canon and Buddhist birth stories.
		Early Vaishnava and Saiva theism.
		Bhagavad-Gita.
		Panini, grammarian.
		Taxila.
Alexander's invasion	327-325	
MAURYA DYNASTY	322-184	*Arthashastra* of Chanakya.
Chandragupta	322-296	Pataliputra.
Asoka	274-237	Megasthenes at Asoka's court.
		Pillar edicts and missions.
		Sanchi stupa.
		Buddhism reaches Ceylon.
		Earliest cave temples.
INDO-GREEK AND INDO-PARTHIAN DYNASTIES IN THE PUNJAB	250 B.C.-60 A.D.	
	2nd century	Patanjali mentions Hindu images.
		Vaishnava pillar erected by Heliodora.
ANDHRA DYNASTY	220 B.C.-236 A.D.	Barhut railing, 2nd century.
		Amravati stupa, 2nd century.
		Sanchi rails and toranas, 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.
		Earliest Ajanta paintings.
SUNGA DYNASTY	184-72	Bodh-Gaya railing, 1st century B.C.
Menander in Sindh	155	Buddhist caves at Bedsa, Karle, Nasik, Kondane, etc.
Saka and Kushan invasions	150	Gudimallam lingam.

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KANVA DYNASTY	72-27	Sacrificial post of Isapur (first Sanskrit inscription).
	88	Buddhist canon committed to writing.
Vikrama *Samvat* era	58	
KUSHANA DYNASTY	65-225 A.D.	Indo-Hellenistic art of Gandhara.
Kanishka	78-120	Mathura school.
Vashishka		Amravati sculptures.
Huvishka		Apollonius of Tyana in India, 43-44.
Vasudeva, 140		
	67	Buddhism reaches China.
Saka era	78	Jainism divided into two sects: *Digambara* and *Svetambara*.
Early Pandya, Chola, and Chera kingdoms in the South		Ashvagosha: Nagarjuna.
		Arya Sura: Asanga: Vasubandhu, Roman trade.
		Tamil sangam: Bhasha, early Sanskrit dramatist.
		Laws of Manu. *Kamasutra*.
GUPTA DYNASTY	320-650	Classical Sanskrit and Mahayana form of Buddhism: further development of Vaishnavism and Saivism. Mathematics, drama (Kalidasa, Bharata), music, coins. Final rescensions of Epics. Vayu, Vishnu, and other Puranas, Harivamsa, etc. Paintings of Ajanta and Sigri. Buddhism in Ceylon (Anuradhapura). Brick and stone Brahmanical architecture. Buddhist, Jain, and Brahmanical excavated temples. Indonesian colonies. Intercourse with China.
Chandragupta I	320	
Samudragupta	330	
Chandragupta II	375	
Kumaragupta I	414	
Skandagupta	455	
Kumaragupta II	473	
(Later Gupta dynasty of Magadha)	535-720	
		Travels of Fa Hsien, 399-413.
		Aryabhatta, b. 476.
First invasion of the Huns	450	Buddhism in Siam.
PALLAVA DYNASTY (South)	6th to 10th century	Kanchipuram, Mamallapuram (earliest Dravidian architecture). Primitive architecture of Cambodia.
Mahendravarman	600	
Narasimhavarman	625	
Mihirgula (Hun)	510-540	Varahamihira, d. 587.
CHALUKYAN DYNASTY (Deccan)	550-1190	Early temples of Badami, Osia, and Aihole.
Pulakesin II	608	
Narsavardhana	606-647	
HIJRA era (flight of Muhammad from Mecca)	622	Travels of Hsuan Tsang, 629-645.
		Nalanda university.
		Mahayana Buddhism brought to Cambodia and Indonesia.
		Travels of I Ching, 671-695.
		Santi Deva
	5th to 9th century	Saiva hymnists. Tirujnana, Sambhanda Swami, Tirumular, and Sundaramurti Swami.

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		Mannika Vacagar.
		Twelve Vaishnava Alvars.
		Decline of Buddhism throughout India except Bengal, and decline of Jainism in South.
Rise of the Rajputs	700	
Arab conquest of Sindh	712	6th c. 6th, 7th, 8th
	8th century	Elephanta, Elura (Brahmanical excavations and sculpture).
		Fall of Anuradhapura and establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon.
Mihira Bhoja	*c.* 840-900	Rajasekhara.
PALA DYNASTY of Bengal	730-1197	Dhiman and Bitpalo, sculptors.
Dharmapala	780-892	Development of Tantrik Buddhism in Bengal and Nepal.
		Saivism in Kashmir.
		Sankaracharya, 780-850.
		Bhagavata-purana.
Jayavarman (Cambodia)	802-869	Khmer art (Cambodia), 6th to 13th century.
		Pagan (Burma), 742.
		Early Sham art (Annam), 7th to 11th century.
		Architecture at Khajuraho, Gwalior, Mount Abu, and in Orissa.
	8th to 10th century	Borobudur and Prambanam, Java, 8th to 9th century (Sumatran power).
Nepalese *Samvat* era	879	Angkor Thom, Cambodia, 9th century.
EARLY CHALUKYAN DYNASTY	973-1198	
LATER CHOLA DYNASTY	907-1310	Tanjore temple.
Rajaraja Deva	985-1035	Ramanuja, b. 1016.
Mahmud of Ghazni	1008-1027	Abhinavagupta, fl. 1000.
Raja Bhoja of Dhar	1018-1060	Hemachandra, 1089-1173.
HOYSHALA DYNASTY	1110-1327	Schwezigon and Ananda pagodas.
		Pagan, 1090.
SENA DYNASTY Bengal	1119-1199	
Prithvi Raj	1182	Sham capital at Binh Dinh, 1100.
Changez Khan, b. 1162		Angkor Vat, Cambodia, 11th to 12th century.
Muhammadan conquest of Delhi and Bengal	1199-1200	Hindu rule in East Java, 10th to 16th century.
		Destruction of Buddhist monasteries.
Slave Kings of Delhi	1206	Madhava, 1119-1198.
	13th century	Architecture in Orissa (Konarak, etc.).
		Jayadeva, poet.
		Nimbarka.
		Saiva Siddhanta.
		Fall of Pagan, Burma, 1287.
		Marco Polo in South India.
KHILJI DYNASTY	1290-1318	Panataran, Java.
Kingdom of Vijayanagar supersedes Chola, Chera, and Pandya powers	1336-1346	

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Timur sacks Delhi	1398	Guru Nanak (first Sikh Guru).
	14th century	Ramananda. Vidyapati. Chandidas.
LODI DYNASTY	1450-1526	
BAHMANI DYNASTY (Deccan)	1347-	
Adil Shahi kings of Bijapur	1490-1673	
	15th century	Vallabha, b. 1479.
		Kabir, d. 1518.
		Chaitanya, 1485-1533.
		Zenith of Vernacular Hindi and Bengali literatures.
		Siamese conquest of Cambodia, 1473.
	1478	Muhammadan conquest of Java. Hinduism survives in Bali.
Krishnaraya Deva of Vijayanagar	16th to 17th century	Tulsi Das, 1532-1623.
		Portuguese at Calicut, 1498.
MUGHAL DYNASTY	1526-1671	
Babur	1526-1530	
Humayun		
Akbar	1556-1606	Hindu-Muslim unity brought about by the Great Mughal. Conquest of Kashmir, Kangra, and much of Rajputana.
		Mughal painting.
		Rajput painting.
Jahangir	1606-1627	London East India Company, 1600.
Shah Jahan	1627-1658	English factory at Surat, 1608.
Aurangzeb		La Compagnie des Indes, 1664.
Guru Gobind Singh	1675-1708	Sikhs become a political power.
Sivaji	1674-1680	The rise of the Marhattas.
Nadir Shah sacks Delhi	1739	
British Empire	1858	
	19th century	Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj.
		Brahmo Samaj.
		Prophets of the New India: Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, M. K. Gandhi.
		Poets of the New India: Toru Dutt, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Muhammad Iqbal, Sarojini Naidu, Bhai Vir Singh.
	20th century	Nationalism.
		Bengal painters.
	1947	Transfer of power from British to Indian hands.

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Mulk Raj Anand comes from a family of hereditary craftsmen in north India. During his early life he was apprenticed to silversmithy, besides being schooled in British Indian Western style learning.

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